

Environmental Health Officer Survival Guide

September 2018

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This document is an endorsed project of the Environmental Health Officer's Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC).

It is intended to serve as a guide for all Environmental Health Officers – with an emphasis on those newly commissioned – who would benefit from a compilation of critical take-home messages to augment the start of their career.

Multiple Officers have contributed to this document and as such, varying styles and opinions are expressed in manners that may or may not be representative of the EHOPAC, the Commissioned Corps, or the Department of Health & Human Services. It has been edited for clarity, accuracy, and relevance; however, it should be noted that a fervent attempt to retain the individuality and passion of the contributors has been a key goal of this project. The ranks of officers who submitted and contributed to articles in this guide have not been updated to maintain the integrity of the First Edition.

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FOREWORD

The Environmental Health Officer community is one that I've had the pleasure of being a part of for my nearly 30 years with the U.S. Public Health Service and the Commissioned Corps. I'm proud to have worked in many diverse environments, different agencies, and among some of the most capable, resourceful, and competent people out there. As I wrap up my career with the Corps, my favorite memories center on those diverse opportunities that one just doesn't get outside the U.S. Public Health Service. Opportunities such as investigating a newly emerging disease (hantavirus); participating in an Alien Migrant Interdiction Operation with the Coast Guard; responding to New York City after 9/11; and leading a team of EHOs and other disciplines to assess shelters and schools in the aftermath of Katrina and Rita. I have also had the privilege of mentoring, both officially and unofficially, many EHOs who continue to amaze me with their skills, knowledge, and passion for public health. The point is, there is no greater opportunity to do truly unique and amazing things to support and provide for the public's health than serving as an Environmental Health Officer in the U.S. Public Health Service.

You are now part of a cadre of professionals that has the opportunity to keep the proud tradition of service to the public alive and thriving. Embrace the chance to do great things for those you serve. Do not take your commission for granted either. It took 8 years, five applications, and three appeals to get mine because of a previous medical condition. To put the uniform on and assume the obligations that go with it was one of the most humbling moments of my life.

None of us do it alone. I am forever grateful to those who helped me over the years. Many have now retired and some have passed on. We all have mentors through all stages of our careers. When you get the chance, serve your fellow Officers by being an enthusiastic, wise, and humble mentor.

If I had some advice to give, it would be to grab your career by the horns and make the most of it. While doing that, keep service to the public's health first and foremost – they are the reason you wear the uniform. Consider geographic moves and changing agencies; the rewards of a well-rounded career are tremendous. As a uniformed service, the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service has a rich and proud history with a promising future. Hopefully, this document will share insight to help you walk the walk and be instrumental in maximizing your role in advancing and promoting the nation's health.

Good luck on your Commissioned Corps journey!

CAPT Richard Turner
Editor and Contributing Author

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

This book is an unofficial guide intended to complement the many circulars and directives of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. It is written primarily for new Environmental Health Officers who may benefit from a sort of “boiled down” peer guidance. Officers with some experience may also gain useful information, tips, and guidance as they continue to navigate their career and contribute to this working document. Hopefully, all Environmental Health Officers will gain an appreciation for the information contained in this guide and will be able to relate it to their growth and progression as an Officer and as a public health servant.

This guide is not meant to be a summary or CliffsNotes™ version of U.S. Public Health Service directives and circulars. So, if you are looking for an answer to whether your white blouse may be worn with your khaki pants as an optional summer uniform, then you are looking in the wrong place (the answer though, is a resounding NO!). Please refer to <https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis> for all official circulars and directives. Rather, what your fellow Officers are attempting to achieve in this reference is a sort of “field manual.” It may be best described as a “survive to thrive” guidance document. It is a peer-to-peer resource that will be helpful to fill in the gaps in the application of the PHS rules and orders.

So much gratitude is owed to my fellow compilation authors, LCDR Elena Vaouli and CDR Luis Rodriguez for shepherding several of the chapters and to our editor, CAPT Richard Turner for all of their tireless efforts and continued passion and energy for over a year! I will miss working with them. I will miss the conversations with all the Officers and the dedication and adventurous spirit that allowed these pages to shape themselves.

We are very proud to say that this guide also came from a wide cadre of our own Officers and representatives of various Environmental Health Officer’s Professional Advisory Committee subcommittees such as career development, training, policies and standards, and marketing and recruitment. Several chapters are compiled representing senior as well as newer and rising Environmental Health Officer stars!

I’m proud to present this work of ALL and acknowledge them here:

LT Kazuhiro Okumura, LCDR Jessica Otto, CDR Michael Reed, CDR Tim Jiggins, LCDR Danielle Mills, CAPT Richard Turner, CDR Carrie Oyster, CDR Jacob Wamsley, LCDR Racquel Williams, CDR Aimee Treffiletti, CDR Jill Shugart, CDR Lisa Delaney, LCDR Eva McLanahan, LTJG Sarah Safari, CAPT Clint Chamberlin, LCDR Jason Mangum, LT Chris Fish, CAPT Alan Dellapenna (Ret), LT Kathleen Ferguson, CDR Miguel Cruz, CAPT John Smart, ENS Halie O’Brien, and CAPT Robert McCleery!

Thank you all for your dedication and service to the Corps!

CAPT Tina Lankford
January, 2016

ABBREVIATIONS

| Abbreviation | Terms or Phrase Abbreviated |
|---------------------|---|
| AMSUS | Association of Military Surgeons of the United States |
| APFT | Annual Physical Fitness Test |
| ASH | Assistant Secretary for Health |
| ASPR | Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response |
| ATSDR | Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry |
| BAH | Basic Allowance for Housing |
| CAD | Call to Active Duty |
| CCPM | Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual |
| CDC | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention |
| CIO | Center, Institute, and Office |
| CHP | Certified Health Physicist |
| CIH | Certified Industrial Hygienist |
| COA | Commissioned Officers Association |
| COER | Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report |
| COF | Commissioned Officers Foundation |
| CPO | Chief Professional Officer |
| CSP | Certified Safety Professional |
| CV | Curriculum Vitae |
| DFAC | Dining Facility |
| DHS | Department of Homeland Security |
| DHHS | Department of Health and Human Services |
| DOD | Department of Defense |
| DOI | Department of the Interior |
| EHO | Environmental Health Officer |
| EHOPAC | Environmental Health Officer's Professional Advisory Committee |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency |
| FDA | Food and Drug Administration |
| FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| FOH | Federal Occupational Health |
| HAZWOPER | Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response |
| HRSA | Health Resources and Services Administration |
| HSO | Health Services Officer |
| IHS | Indian Health Service |
| JOAG | Junior Officer Advisory Group |
| JRCOSTEP | Junior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program |
| LOTO | Lock-Out Tag-Out |
| MRE | Meals, Ready-To-Eat |
| NCEH | National Center for Environmental Health |
| NCO | Non-Commissioned Officer |
| NEHA | National Environmental Health Association |
| NIH | National Institutes of Health |
| NIOSH | National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health |
| NOAA | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration |

| Abbreviation | Terms or Phrase Abbreviated |
|---------------------|---|
| NPS | National Park Service |
| OBC | Officer Basic Course |
| ODU | Operational Dress Uniform |
| OFRD | Office of Force Readiness and Deployment |
| OOD | Officer of the Deck |
| OPF | Officer Personnel File |
| OPDIV | Operating Division of the Department of Health and Human Services |
| ORA | Office of Regulatory Affairs |
| OS | Officer's Statement |
| OSG | Office of the Surgeon General |
| OSHA | Occupational Safety and Health Administration |
| PAC | Professional Advisory Committee |
| PHS | United States Public Health Service |
| PIR | Promotion Information Report |
| PPE | Personal Protective Equipment |
| PSC | Program Support Center |
| RAM | Remote Area Medical |
| RedDOG | Readiness and Deployment Operations Group |
| REHS | Registered Environmental Health Specialist |
| ROS | Reviewing Official's Statement |
| RS | Registered Sanitarian |
| UCMJ | Uniform Code of Military Justice |
| USCG | United States Coast Guard |
| USEHA | Uniformed Services Environmental Health Association |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

INTRODUCTION – Your Commitment to the EHO Category and the Commissioned Corps

**By
LT Kazuhiro Okumura**

You have made a major commitment to a vocation and organization that most people will never do in their lifetime. Signing up to wear a uniform and protect the vulnerable and underserved is a duty for the few. During the course of your career, you will have moments where you may feel isolated whether through geographic isolation or being separated from your fellow Officers or civilian colleagues. We put this guide together as a reminder that you are not alone and that thousands of other Officers are serving alongside you.

Officership activities are one of the benchmarks for promotion; but aside from that fact, they are also unique activities that all Commissioned Corps Officers should participate in to connect with their category and the Corps. The hidden benefit is that they are some of the few opportunities to interact with other Officers, especially if you are in an isolated duty station. Participation enables you to spend time with those that are in similar positions and allows you to network and develop relationships with Officers who may be thousands of miles away.

We have been harping about how great the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) category is and will continue to do so throughout this document, but that is because we are one of the most diverse and most multifaceted category in the United States Public Health Service (PHS). We have Officers in almost every agency in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or in agencies that DHHS has a Memorandum of Understanding. For example, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and the National Park Service (NPS) have had agreements spanning decades, with PHS to provide Officers to support their missions and objectives. We even have an industrial hygienist in the Central Intelligence Agency! We have a wealth of deployment experience and are continually asked to fill roles outside of our category both domestically and abroad. We also have a record of taking on special assignments or details, whether it is for the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) or for our own operating division of the Department of Health and Human Services (OPDIV) and sister services.

All of us at one point or another will face difficult situations where our passion and commitment are tested. But it is the reminder that we are a unique group of Officers, dedicated to protecting and promoting the health and safety of others, that give us the motivation and desire to do the best job we can. What you do makes a difference, and know that your service to your country and the public's health will not go unnoticed.

Chapter 1 – Historical Overview

By
CDR Michael Reed and LCDR Elena Vaouli

The Commissioned Corps of the PHS is one of the seven uniformed services of the United States. The Corps is led by the Surgeon General who reports directly to the Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH). Our history dates back to 1798, when John Adams signed into law the *Act for the Relief of Sick and Disabled Seamen*. The following year, Congress extended the Act to cover all Officers and sailors in the U.S. Navy (USN). Over time, this legislation created the marine hospital network among our coastal and inland waterways. The first supervising surgeon (precursor to the Surgeon General title) required uniform wear among his staff in 1871. In 1889, an act of Congress established the PHS Commissioned Corps as a formal uniformed service. The Act organized the Corps along military lines with titles and pay commensurate with Army and USN grades. The PHS's original mission was to support the U.S. Marine Hospital Service in protecting the nation from the introduction or spread of diseases from foreign ports, immigrants, or naval seamen. Today, the quarantine service still exists as a program at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Commissioned Corps' mission has expanded to include healthcare delivery to underserved communities, disease research, food protection, and response to disasters.

Did You Know?

The Environmental Health Officer category (originally the Sanitarian Category) was developed in the early 1940s during the reshaping of the U.S. Public Health Service.

Reading the book *Plagues and Politics: The Story of the United States Public Health Service* (1989) by RADM Fitzhugh Mullan (Ret.) is strongly recommended for an outstanding historical perspective.

From 1948, the year that the Sanitarian Category was established within USPHS, until October 1, 1999 our category was referred to as the Sanitarian Category. Initially our category also included officers that were non-sanitarians up until 1952 when those officers were removed. Following a reorganization of the USPHS as ordered by President Lyndon Johnson in 1967, the Sanitarian Career Service Board was organized in 1968. The Sanitarian Career Service Board, which became the Sanitarian Career Development Committee, was referred to as the Sanitarian Professional Advisory Committee (SPAC). Name changes within the category were suggested as early as 1968 and 1969 to represent a broader number of environmental health professionals. Earlier proposals for a new category name as Environmental Health Specialists were met with strong objection from the PAC board.

SPAC operated from 1968 until October 1, 1999 when the category officially changed name to the Environmental Health Officer Category and the SPAC became the Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC). According to PAC meeting minutes from 1998 and 1999, the category was undergoing a restructuring initiative and the proposal to change the name of the category was a part of a larger package to significantly revise the entire promotion regulation. CAPT Thomas E. Crow (SPAC Chair and 6th Chief Sanitarian Officer) reported that the proposal to officially change the name of the Category to Environmental Health Officer had gone forward as part of a larger

package to make several changes to Departmental Operating Memoranda. In an effort to resolve the issue of the name change without having to wait for the resolution of other issues, it was requested that the name change be dealt with separately. Per legal counsel with the Office of the Surgeon General, the proposal for the category name change could not be separated from the larger package in an attempt to expedite the process. Category leadership viewed the new proposal for restructuring the category, and the proposed change of the category name as positive steps to move the category in line with current and future professional needs while addressing changes to the category's identity. The name change became effective October 1, 1999, under a revision to Instruction 1, Regulation CC43.0, "Titles" of the Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual. There were 352 active duty officers in our category at the time of the name change in 1999, serving in the following agencies: OS, HRSA, CDC, FDA, HIS, SAMHSA, NIH, ACHPR, ATSDR, EPA, PSC.

Since the beginning of the category, the Sanitarian and EHO has played a significant role in improving health and quality of life in domestic and international settings. They have been directly involved in many of the nation's most significant public health successes, and currently serve in over 15 agencies within the federal government. Additional Officers are detailed throughout the United States and abroad in positions critical to our nation's public health security.

Environmental Health Officers are highly skilled professionals with qualifying degrees in environmental health and safety, industrial hygiene, occupational safety and health, or hold professional credentials as certified industrial hygienists (CIH) or health physicists (CHP). Most EHOs maintain one or more professional credential such as Registered Sanitarian (RS), Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS), Certified Safety Professional (CSP), CIH, or CHP.

With approximately 350 Officers at any given time, EHOs carry out a wide variety of activities in diverse settings. Examples include epidemiological surveillance, disease prevention, radiological health, industrial hygiene, food safety, injury prevention, health education, and ensuring adequate safe water supplies. With response roles that are ever evolving, EHOs respond during emergencies, such as natural and manmade disasters, to protect the public from environmental threats and assist with recovery efforts.

A timeline of important milestones of the Environmental Health Officer Category can be found in Appendix A.

Since the inception of the category, EHOs have continually demonstrated their commitment to ¹*Protect, Promote, and Advance the Health and Safety of our Nation*. Their multidisciplinary skill set fills a critical role in our nation's public health system. The future of the EHO category is a bright and promising one.

References and Citations:

1. Historical Timeline of the Commissioned Corps: <http://www.usphs.gov/aboutus/history.aspx>
2. Fitzhugh Mullan, *Plagues and Politics: The Story of the United States Public Health Service* (1989).

¹ The Mission of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps

Chapter 2 – PHS Etiquette and the Uniform

By
CDR Luis Rodriguez

Contributions by CAPT Richard Turner

“The uniform has become part of the identity of the U.S. Public Health Service – it allows us to stand out as the only uniformed service in the world dedicated to a public health mission, reassures our nation that the mission is in the hands of a professional and dedicated service, and honors the legacy and history of the Corps.”

RADM Boris D. Lushniak, MD, MPH, former Deputy Surgeon General
U.S. Public Health Service

History of the USPHS Uniform

NOTE: Please see the citations and references at the end of this chapter for further details about uniform history and military protocols. The majority of this chapter is constructed of excerpts from those various references to give you the most critical information in a logical order.

To truly feel the responsibility and pride of being a uniformed Officer, we need to understand the origins of our uniform. Few things inspire pride and esprit de corps more than the PHS uniform. By wearing the uniform, Commissioned Corps Officers display a profound respect for their country, their service, their brother and sister Officers, and themselves. Uniforms promote the visibility and credibility of the Commissioned Corps to the general public and the nation’s underserved populations whom Officers are devoted to serving.

The PHS uniform traces its roots back to 1871 when John Maynard Woodworth, the first supervising surgeon (now known as the Surgeon General), organized the service along military lines. The uniforms of today reflect the proud legacy and tradition of a service that is more than 200 years old. Uniforms link today’s Officers to their heritage and connect them to past Officers. Since they represent the Commissioned Corps history and tradition, rigorous standards apply to wearing the uniform, and every Officer is obligated to uphold those standards with pride and distinction.

Similar to the other services, the Commissioned Corps has several uniforms including the service dress blues, summer whites, service khakis, and operational dress uniform (ODU). Each uniform reflects the great responsibility and privilege that comes with being a commissioned Officer.

Perhaps the uniform that we wear the most is the service khaki uniform. It may be just personal preference or because it is comfortable and does not get soiled as easily as our whites but certainly it is the most commonly worn. Before you came onboard the PHS, you will have recognized this uniform already. The khaki uniform has become one of the most recognizable and versatile service and work uniforms in the uniformed services of the United States.

All seven of the uniformed services have worn various designs of the khaki uniform since the late 19th century. Today, the khaki uniform has become an icon of the USN that symbolizes the leadership, respect, and power of the Officers and chiefs. However, did you know that the PHS khaki uniform was authorized for wear nearly 12 years earlier than the USN’s khaki uniform? The PHS khaki uniform consisted of a single breasted jacket with metal grade insignia, khaki trousers, and tan/brown shoes.

The PHS first khaki uniform was phased out and replaced in World War I with the doughboy olive drab uniform. The PHS khaki uniform returned just before World War II, based entirely on the USN's service dress khaki uniform.

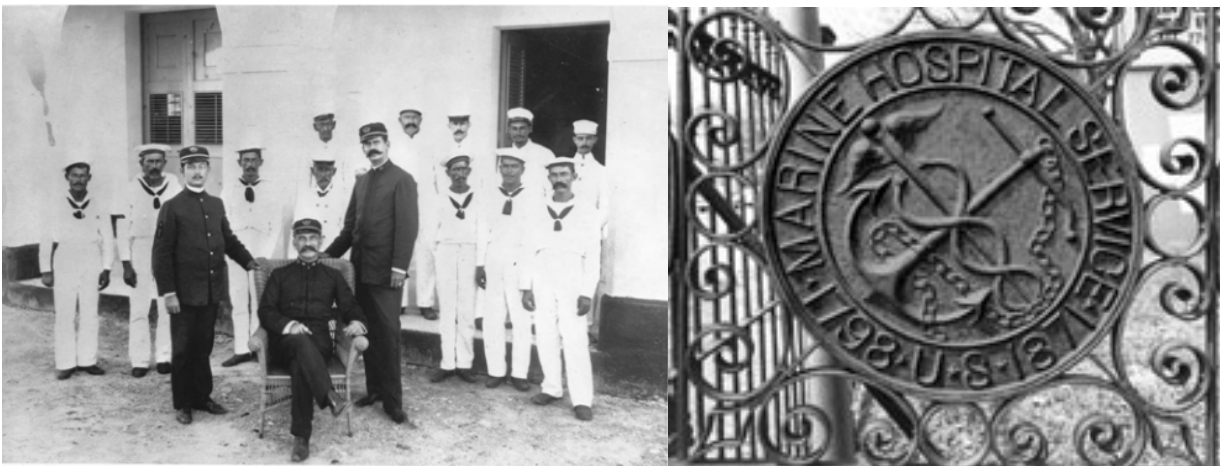
Did You Know?

The PHS khaki uniform was authorized for wear nearly 12 years earlier than the U.S. Navy's khaki uniform.

There have been many other uniforms and we should be proud of all of them.

Remember, the uniform is bigger than you are!

Looking back at our origins:



San Juan, Puerto Rico, Quarantine Station, Summer 1899

During the Spanish-American War, San Juan, Puerto Rico was used as a staging point for troops going to Cuba and returning to the Gulf Coast of the United States. Marine-Hospital Service surgeons were routinely assigned to Army transports in and out of San Juan. The Officer in command, a surgeon, is pictured seated in the center. To the right is an acting assistant surgeon, and to the left is a hospital steward of the first or second class. The men pictured in the white uniforms are the crew of the Marine-Hospital Service disinfecting barge Defender

Knowing a bit of our origins speaks louder than anything!

Appearance and Grooming

Become very familiar with the latest Commissioned Corps Instruction on Uniforms and Appearance²(CC412.01). In the instruction, you will learn, and be able to reference, the myriad requirements associated with maintaining your appearance while in uniform. Remember, you represent many others including agencies, organizations, and fellow Officers. It is critical that you establish sound and fundamental habits in uniform wear and appearance that bring credit and honor to our service.

As an example of available information, you may have heard the term “faddish” in respect to jewelry, accessories, hairstyles, and so forth. This instruction, and the footnote below, provides the³definition for your reading pleasure. Additionally, the instruction defines clearly acceptable hair styles, facial hair issues, and even piercings and tattoos. Sorry, handlebars, goatees, or other eccentric or faddish facial hair styles are not permitted at any time.

Body mutilation, piercings, and dental ornamentation are just some of the other fun topics covered in the instruction. For instance, you can’t have a split or forked tongue, nor can you have gold veneers for purposes of ornamentation on your teeth. Who knew? Well, you do now. Remember, there are some things you can do while in civilian clothing, and there are some things you can’t do under any circumstances as an Officer. Please familiarize yourself with the details as defined in writing.

Can you have a tattoo? Sure. Maybe. No. All correct answers depending on the situation. Check out the paragraph on tattoos on page 11 of the instruction. While it is safe to say that you can’t get a unicorn or butterfly (or anything else) on your forehead, other tattoos and locations may or may not be acceptable, may require a waiver, or may be permitted with nothing other than your judgment and adherence to the instruction. Be wise, ask around, and read the instruction before you go to San Diego for the weekend.

Origins of Saluting

When we talk about military courtesies, saluting is one of the most common and basic forms. To the novice or uninitiated, this can be very intimidating. Many PHS Officers are detailed with civilians, outside of a military environment, and we don’t have the opportunity to practice this skill. When to salute, who to salute, do I start the salute, what happens if I do it wrong? Doing it the wrong way can be embarrassing (Yikes!) to say the least. But don’t despair, saluting is nothing more than an exchange of greetings between military and/or uniformed services personnel. Failure to salute is not an option, so learn the rules and go for it!

Some believe the origins of saluting come from the age of chivalry when two knights met and raised their visors to expose their faces. This allowed the knights to recognize their allies vs. their enemies. The raising of the visor was always performed with the⁴right hand. During the Middle Ages, men wore heavy capes to conceal their swords. When two men would greet each other they would raise their right arm to show that it was not on the sword hilt. Greeting someone without raising your right arm could mean that you are about to attack. During the days of the Borgias (15th and 16th centuries)

² <https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/CC412.01.pdf>

³ Faddish: A style followed for a short period of time with exaggerated zeal. Styles are enduring; fads are generally short in duration and frequently started by an individual or event in the civilian community. Fads are generally conspicuous and detract from a professional appearance.

⁴ Approximately 9%–10% of the world’s population is left-handed.

assassination by using a knife or dagger was common. When greeting someone, the right hand was raised to show that the person was not concealing a dagger.

The current salute used by naval personnel has its origins from the British Navy, who in turn borrowed their hand salute from the British Army. British as well as French soldiers will salute with their right hand turned outward. Some believe that this custom allowed the person being greeted to see there was no weapon in the hand of the person. Since the first days of military organizations, juniors have always uncovered when addressing seniors. This was done by touching the hat or cap with the right hand or taking it off. If the person was not wearing a hat or cover, he would grab a lock of hair. In the late 19th century, Queen Victoria decreed that the hand salute was to be used instead of taking your hat or cap off. This decree came about because military members would uncover in the presence of the queen during official ceremonies and this was considered unsatisfactory.

Did You Know?

In the late 19th century, Queen Victoria decreed that the hand salute was to be used instead of taking one's hat or cap off.

Importance of Saluting

To you as a PHS Officer, it is extremely important that you render and properly return a hand salute. Failure to do so not only reflects negatively on you the Officer, but on the Corps as well. People have often asked: *What do you never get a second chance to make?* The answer is: *A first impression.* This holds true for your ability to properly render a hand salute. It has been said that a sloppy salute is worse than not saluting at all. Your technique and your confidence to apply your saluting skills are directly proportional to how much you practice. Not every Officer will be detailed to an armed service where saluting is an everyday occurrence, but you can practice at your current duty station and if possible visit your nearest military installation in uniform. It is expected that you will make mistakes, but this holds true for any learning process. Practice and a sincere effort will decrease the number of mistakes and help you avoid embarrassment.

Go ahead and practice in front of the mirror. We all have done it...

Proper Saluting: How/When/Where/Who

Execution of the Hand Salute is performed as follows: *the right hand is raised smartly until the tip of the forefinger touches the lower part of the headdress or forehead above and slightly to the right of the right eye, thumb and fingers extended and joined, palm to the left, upper arm horizontal, forearm inclined at 45 degrees, hand and wrist straight; at the same time turn head toward the person saluted. To complete the salute, drop the arm to its normal position by the side in one motion, at the same time turning the head and eyes to the front.*

Did You Know?

It is the junior officer's responsibility to initiate the salute. Remember that you are responsible to hold the salute until the senior officer drops theirs. Enlisted personnel only salute officers, not other enlisted personnel, regardless of their rank.

It is also appropriate to accompany your salute with, "Good morning Sir/Ma'am" depending on the situation. In the USN and USCG, Officers below the rank of Commander (O-5) are usually addressed as "Mister" or "Miss" depending on the situation. Officers who are at the rank of Commander or above are usually addressed by their rank, i.e., "Good morning Commander Jones" or "Good afternoon Admiral Smith." You can never go wrong by using "Sir" or "Ma'am," but it is a nice touch if you can properly address a senior Officer.

In most military services, date of rank is a critical factor, and many Officers will initiate a salute to an Officer of equal rank but with an earlier date of rank, if known.

Salutes are usually rendered between 6 and 30 paces. If you are running you should slow down to a walk prior to saluting. If you are standing, you should face the individual to be saluted, come to the position of attention, and then render a hand salute. Salutes are also exchanged when two members first meet and again when the conversation is completed just prior to departing.

Salutes must be rendered and returned to all members of the uniformed services. The Army, USN, Air Force, Marines, USCG, PHS, and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are all included. If you study the chart in the appendix, and make a sincere effort, you will be less likely to make mistakes.

If two Officers or an Officer and enlisted member approach with the intent of **conversing, salutes are exchanged then and also after the conversation is completed.** Forgetting to salute after conversation has ended is a common mistake. It is the junior person's responsibility to initiate this courtesy prior to departing just as the junior person should salute if passing someone senior to him or her.

Saluting when not in uniform and uncovered is not usually performed by members of the Naval Services. You may see this practice in the Army and/or the Air Force. If you are saluted and you are not in uniform or in uniform and not covered, tradition dictates that you do not salute.

Instead you may greet the person saluting you with "good morning," "good afternoon," or "good evening" depending on the situation. If you approach someone who is senior to you and you are in civilian attire, you do not salute. Instead, you may say "good morning/evening Sir/Ma'am" depending on the situation.

As stated before, the junior person must salute the senior Officer present. This is straightforward if there are only two individuals. Confusion can arise when more than two people of different Officer ranks are present. The general rule that applies is you always salute the senior Officer no matter how many other Officers are present. If you are outdoors and with a group of Officers and/or enlisted and an Officer senior to all the Officers present approaches, all of the members must stop what they are

doing, face the senior Officer, come to the position of attention and render a hand salute. To avoid missing a senior Officer passing close by you must be attentive to people around you while outdoors.

What do you mean by covered and uncovered?

Covered refers to when you wear your cover (hat). *Uncovered* is when you remove your cover. When to be **covered vs. uncovered** is a common question among uniformed service members. Each military installation has its own unique regulations regarding when to be covered, but **you can never go wrong if you are outdoors and are wearing your cover**. The real confusion lies in defining what is considered *outdoors*.

The term *outdoors* includes:

- Drill halls when used for drilling purposes or official ceremonies.
- Theater marquee (canopy projecting over the main entrance)
- Gas station overhang
- Covered walks or overhangs that extend over the sidewalk

The term *indoors* refers to:

- Offices
- Hallways
- Mess halls
- Gymnasiums
- Kitchens
- Orderly rooms
- Bathrooms (called head in the USN, latrine in the Army)
- Libraries
- Dwellings
- Inside airport terminals
- Subways

Saluting the “colors” refers to paying tribute to the United States flag. There are two daily ceremonies – primarily on military installations – in which uniformed service personnel will salute the colors (national flag). The first is at the beginning of the day (@ 0800). This ceremony involves raising the national flag while the U.S. national anthem is played. The second is at sunset, and consists of lowering the national flag while “retreat” or the U.S. national anthem is played. During both situations if you are outdoors, you must stop what you are doing, face the flag or the direction in which colors are being held, come to the position of attention and render a hand salute. You must hold this salute until the last note of the music; then you may proceed.

On Army and Air Force installations it is customary to stop your vehicle, get out, come to the position of attention, and render a hand salute if colors or retreat is sounded. On Naval or USCG installations when colors or retreat is sounded, you must stop your vehicle and sit at attention until the last note of the music is sounded; then you may proceed. If you are in doubt whether to sit at attention or exit your vehicle, it is better to be formal than disrespectful. Therefore, it is recommended that you exit your vehicle, face in the direction where colors are being held, come to the position of attention and render a hand salute.

Whether you are driving your vehicle or walking through a military installation, you **should never dash under cover or rush to avoid paying respect to the flag**. Dependents and civilians should face

in the direction where colors are being held and stand at attention (placing right hand over their heart is optional). Talking during colors or retreat is forbidden and considered disrespectful.

Another common ceremony is the **cannon salute**. This form of salute can be rendered to an individual such as a Flag Officer (Admiral or General), a high-ranking dignitary, or to recognize a particular day such as Memorial Day. On this particular day, a 21-gun salute is fired at 3-second intervals and occurs at 1200 hours. If you are outdoors on a military installation during this ceremony, you must stop what you are doing, face in the direction of the national flag, come to the position of attention and render a hand salute (if in uniform). You will hold the salute until the last gun is fired; then you may proceed. If you are in civilian clothes, you will face the flag and come to the position of attention until the last gun is fired. On Independence Day, a 50-gun salute is fired in some locales. You must observe the same customs and courtesies as during Memorial Day.

Other times when a cannon salute will be fired are when *honors* are paid to visiting **Flag Officers or high ranking dignitaries**. The specific number of guns fired for visiting officials may be found with a simple Google search. If you are in the immediate vicinity where honors are being held, you will also come to the position of attention and render a hand salute until the last gun is fired or the command *order arms* is given. Other situations include the occasion of the death or funeral of a President or Vice President. You normally do not salute at this ceremony because it occurs after the colors are lowered.

There are four different names for the national flag:

- The Flag
- The Colors
- The Standard
- The National Ensign

When boarding and departing Naval and Coast Guard vessels you must salute the National Ensign (flag). The two methods for boarding a naval vessel will be with *the quarterdeck* on the pier and with the *quarterdeck* onboard the ship. The quarterdeck is considered the *seat of authority* for a vessel. The quarterdeck may in fact, be just a podium on board the vessel or a small structure on the pier. The Officer of the Deck (OOD) will be located on the quarterdeck, and he or she represents the Captain. The commanding Officer of a ship is always referred to as “Captain” regardless of their rank.

If the Quarterdeck is on the pier, you will salute the Officer of the deck and say, “Request permission to go aboard sir/ma’am.” When permission is granted you may proceed onto the *brow* (passageway) from the pier to the ship. At the top of the brow you will stop and turn towards the National Ensign (usually located at the rear of the ship or the stern), come to the position of attention and render a hand salute. After dropping your salute you may proceed aboard. When leaving the ship, you will salute the National Ensign, proceed onto the brow. At the end of the brow you will face the Officer of the deck and say, “Request permission to go ashore sir/ma’am.” After permission is granted, you may proceed ashore.

Did You Know?

A Senior Officer (0-5 and above) will be “piped” on and off a vessel. That means the individual manning the quarterdeck will announce the arrival and departure of the Senior Officer against a set of rules over a loud speaker. For instance, if you are detailed to the Coast Guard, and boarding a cutter, a bell will be struck to herald the announcement of your arrival or departure such as “*Now Arriving, Coast Guard Commander.*” Don’t be surprised at this, be prepared for it...

If the quarterdeck is on board ship, you will proceed onto the brow. At the top of the brow you will turn towards the National Ensign and render a hand salute. Next you will turn towards the Officer of the deck, salute, and request permission to come aboard. After permission is granted you may proceed aboard. To leave the ship, you reverse the order in which you came aboard. You will salute the Officer of the deck and request permission to go ashore. After permission is granted, you will proceed onto the brow, turn towards the National Ensign and render a hand salute. You may then proceed ashore.

Other occasions where you would salute the National Ensign would be if it was being carried by a Color Guard. This usually consists of approximately four service members. Two of the members will be carrying flags while the other two will be *under arms* (carrying rifles). If you are sitting, you must stand, come to the position of attention and render a hand salute if in uniform and covered. You must hold the salute until the colors pass by. If you are in civilian attire, you must also rise and come to the position of attention. Placing your right hand over your heart is optional. Like the salute, you will hold this position until the colors pass.

If you are attending a military funeral in uniform, you must adhere to certain courtesies. **You will render a hand salute if you are in uniform and covered (wearing your hat)** during the following situations:

- The casket is being moved
- While the casket is being lowered into the grave
- During the firing of the volley (usually seven members firing simultaneously three times)
- TAPS is being sounded (this is usually one bugler)

If you are attending the funeral in civilian attire, you will come to the position of attention and remove your hat if you are wearing one and place it over your heart. If no hat is worn, you will place your right hand over your heart.

Military members who are active pallbearers (assigned to carry the casket) will remain covered and do not salute during the ceremony.

During a funeral... what else?

A badge of military mourning may be worn during military funerals, but this at the discretion of the commanding Officer. If so prescribed, the mourning badge will consist of a straight band of black crepe or plain black cloth approximately 4 inches wide. This is worn on the left sleeve of the outer garment above the elbow.

The military funeral may have slight variations but some basic components remain constant. The ceremony starts with the casket of the service member, which is draped with the American flag being loaded onto a hearse (caissons are used at Arlington National Cemetery – a cart that carries the casket and is drawn by horses). The hearse is driven to the burial site where six military body bearers remove the casket from the hearse and carry it to the grave site. The body bearers hold the flag waist-high over the casket. The chaplain reads the committal service, which is followed by the firing party firing three volleys. A bugler then sounds TAPS. The flag is then folded in a prescribed manner and presented to the next of kin. The above ceremony is conducted regardless of the military member's rank.

Space - A!

There had been many questions regarding whether or not to wear **your cover on the “flight line.”** In the USCG, covers are not allowed on the flight line because if a cover blows off, it could be sucked into an aircraft engine, causing serious damage. The best advice is to ask the service member at the passenger counter if the flight line is a *covered area* (Meaning do you need to be covered?).

The general rules for being *covered* apply inside the passenger terminal (no cover), and outside the passenger terminal (covered) **except when on the flight line where covers are prohibited for safety reasons.** Some “Space - A” flights require you to fly in uniform, while others prohibit the wearing of your uniform. It is best to call ahead to clarify any questions you may have.

Are there military courtesies while in a car? (seriously?)

Absolutely! Riding in a car with other uniformed service members can be a common occurrence. The junior Officer enters first so the senior Officer may enter last. This situation may be reversed if you are entering from the left side of the vehicle. If three persons are traveling, the junior person will take the middle seat. The place of honor is always to the right, so the senior person will sit on the right. This also holds true if you are walking with two or more people (the senior person is always on the right). It is the junior person who is responsible for lining-up on the correct side of the senior Officer (to the left). When it is time to disembark from the vehicle, the senior person gets out first followed by the next in rank and so on.

Who goes first in the military – the man or the woman?

There has been much confusion regarding this question. **If a man is with a woman, the woman goes first except:**

- when assistance is needed
- there is no one to escort you to your table in a restaurant or your seat in a movie theater
- when there is a large crowd where the man will clear the way
- official military occasions where rank takes precedence over gender

Rifles and Swords?

There will be times during your PHS career that you may encounter a *rifle or a sword salute*. A service member who is carrying a sword or a rifle/pistol is considered *under arms*. You must be able to recognize and properly return these salutes.

The sword salute is distinctly different from the rifle salute. The salute is initiated by the person who is under arms (carrying the sword) by coming to the position of attention. Next, the person under arms will rotate the blade of the sword up so it rests against the front of the right shoulder (this can also be done at the same time the person comes to the position of attention). From here, the sword handle is brought from the right hip to in front of the person's face approximately a fists distance away from their chin, right elbow tucked into their side. From here, the sword handle is lowered down to the level of the right hip in line with the trouser seam, the palm is facing forward and the sword blade is angled approximately 30 degrees forward so as not to touch the ground. The above sequence is equivalent to bringing your right hand up to your forehead or visor during a hand salute. The person who is under arms will hold this position until a hand salute is rendered and dropped. After this, the sword handle is rotated inboard so the palm of the hand faces the trouser seam. This is the equivalent of dropping your hand from your visor to your side during a hand salute.

Recognizing and properly returning salutes from enlisted personnel is at the *Heart of Military Courtesy*. Public Health Service and NOAA Officer ranks are equivalent to the USN and the USCG. It is highly recommended that you become familiar with these in order to properly recognize men and women of the armed services. It is a nice touch if you can address an enlisted member by their rank, i.e., *Good morning Petty Officer Jones* or *Good afternoon 1st Sergeant Smith*. In general, enlisted insignia will be in the form of “Stripes, Chevrons, Anchors, and Eagles.” Officer insignia have “Bars, Oak Leaves, Eagles, or Stars.”

Saluting a Flag Officer's vehicle is an essential component of military courtesy. If you are on a military installation and a vehicle approaches carrying a flag with one or more stars on it, you must stop, face the vehicle, come to the position of attention and render a hand salute. You may drop your salute once the vehicle passes. The flag signifies that an Admiral or General is riding in the vehicle.

When overtaking an Officer who is senior to you, tradition dictates that you must render a hand salute and say, “By your leave Sir/Ma’am” depending on the situation. The Officer who is senior will return your salute and say, “Carry on.” You may then drop your salute and proceed.

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NOTE: The following page is a chart of Officer ranks for all the uniformed services. Appendix A maintains a series of charts for all the enlisted ranks for all the armed services.

Uniformed Service Rank Chart

| | Department of Health & Human Services | Department of Commerce | Department of Homeland Security | Department of Defense | Department of Defense | | | | |
|-------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|------------------|--|------|
| | Sea Services | | | | Land Services | | | | |
| | U.S. Public Health Service | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | Coast Guard | Navy | Army | Air Force | Marine Corps | | |
| GRADE | 01 | | | | | | | | |
| | 02 | | | | | | | | RANK |
| | 03 | | | | | | | | |
| | 04 | | | | | | | | |
| | 05 | | | | | | | | |
| | 06 | | | | | | | | |
| | 07 | | | | | | | | |
| | 08 | | | | | | | | |
| | 09 | | | | | | | | |
| | 10 | | | | | | | | |

Chapter 3 – Career Assignments and Opportunities

By
CDR Timothy Jiggins

Contributions by CAPT Richard Turner, CDR Carolyn Oyster, and LCDR Danielle Mills

Introduction

When the Sanitarian category was created, it was the catch-all category for chemists, entomologists, and others who did not fit into an established professional category. We have since evolved into the EHO category, but we continue to be a diverse group with Officers serving in many different agencies. When the time comes to seek a new assignment, we hope this chapter helps you map your course, whether you seek new skills and adventure, a travel-free assignment that will allow you to finish your graduate degree, or just want to see a new part of the country.

The guides below capture some pertinent details about each agency, but they will be just a start in your journey. There is no substitute for using your network of professional acquaintances to perform your due diligence. If you are a junior Officer, you can start building that network by picking up the phone or sitting down with someone at a professional conference and asking, *what is it like to work there?* To help start that conversation, we present the following thumbnail sketches of the operating divisions and agencies that typically host at least five EHOs:

CDC & ATSDR – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention & Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

The CDC serves as the national focus for developing and applying disease prevention and control, environmental health, health promotion, and health education activities. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) works to prevent harmful exposures and diseases related to toxic substances. Nearly 900 Commissioned Corps Officers of the PHS are assigned to CDC, and approximately 75 Officers are in the category of environmental health. There are approximately 40 Officers at ATSDR, and half of those are EHOs. CDC employs EHOs in all different ranks. Although EHOs are scattered throughout CDC's Center, Institute, and Offices (CIOs), most EHOs work in the Office of Non-communicable Diseases, Injury, and Environmental Health. EHOs work on a variety of environmental health topics that include: air quality & respiratory health, bio-monitoring, chemical weapons elimination, lead poisoning prevention, climate and health, community exposures to hazardous and toxic substances, cruise ship health, healthy places and homes, human exposure to environmental chemicals, natural disasters & severe weather, health and safety, newborn screening, pesticide and vector control, radiation, smoking and tobacco use, and water.

Some EHOs work in less traditional environmental health roles, such as emergency management and chronic diseases. The majority of the jobs are on six campuses in Atlanta, GA, but CDC has folks in different divisions embedded with health departments across the country; quarantine offices in many major international airports; the Vessel Sanitation Program in Ft. Lauderdale, FL; and campuses in Hyattsville, MD; Raleigh, NC; San Juan, PR; Washington D.C.; and Fort Collins, CO. There are a variety of fieldwork, lab, and office positions with billets ranging from O-3 through O-6 with the potential for a few flag Officer positions.

Also worth noting is the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), whose primary facilities are in Cincinnati, OH, and Morgantown, WV. If you are a CIH who dreams of being president of the American Industrial Hygiene Association then NIOSH is the place for you. There are

dozens of billets for you to perform surveys in the field, lead epidemiologic studies, conduct research in engineering controls, or improve the profession of industrial hygiene. A focused research mission and recruitment of wicked-smart staff produces an almost academic culture and a tightly knit camaraderie. Many Officers spend an entire career at NIOSH, so competition for senior billets is high.

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

While the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regional offices have some Engineer and Health Sciences Officers (HSO) who carry out the EPA mission to protect the environment, EHOs are generally found in health and safety, laboratory, and emergency response settings where they protect people from the environment. The campus in Research Triangle Park, NC, is the largest single location of EHO billets, but other EHOs are scattered across the country in smaller cities like Corvallis, OR, Las Vegas, NV, and Athens, GA. Outside of Research Triangle Park, most EHOs are the only Officer at their location. When the EPA was created in 1970 it inherited responsibilities and Commissioned Officers from the PHS, but it is an independent agency outside of DHHS. As such, the EPA marches to its own beat, and an assignment here is a unique experience. The EPA submits award nominations once a year, so you need to be strategic when seeking award recognition for your work. You should also expect to provide guidance to your civilian supervisors when completing administrative Corps requirements like Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Reports (COERs) and attaining supervisory approvals for collateral PHS activities. While this is true for all agencies, communicating expectations and Corps details with supervisors is critical with EPA. With limited entry level positions and few senior grade billets, an assignment with the EPA is best for mid-career Officers looking for a change of environment.

FDA – Food and Drug Administration

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is responsible for protecting the public's health by assuring the safety, efficacy, and security of human and veterinary drugs, biological products, medical devices, our nation's food supply, cosmetics, and products that emit radiation. Over 1,000 Commissioned Officers are assigned to FDA, approximately 100 of them as EHOs. The National Capitol Region hosts most of FDA's CIOs such as the Office of the Commissioner, Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, Center for Tobacco Products, Center for Veterinary Medicine, National Center for Toxicological Research, and Office of Science and Engineering Laboratories. Although EHOs are scattered throughout FDA, about three quarters of them work for the Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA), which has locations throughout the country. If you have a strong desire to get to a specific area of the country you might want to look into ORA, specifically in the Investigations Branch. FDA also offers opportunities to travel and work abroad with the international cadre. Billets in FDA range from O-2 through O-6. Most of the billets in ORA start out in the O-2/O-3 range with no previous ORA experience, so many EHOs have started their journey here.

HRSA – Health Resources and Services Administration

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) improves access to health care by strengthening the health care workforce, building healthy communities, achieving health equity, and providing health care to people who are geographically isolated or are economically or medically vulnerable. HRSA's mission is quite a change from routine EHO duties (e.g., sampling for water quality, conducting food service surveys, or measuring noise levels). HRSA duty stations are clustered in the HHS Regional cities and the National Capitol Region, and EHOs in HRSA tend to be mid-career or senior level administrators and managers who oversee programs, projects, and grants. The EHO shouldn't worry about being a fish out of water, as HRSA has almost 200 Officers from nearly every professional category and provides the tools and training needed to get the job done. The primary reason that few EHOs work in HRSA is that it is not a traditional environmental health career choice. With the sun setting on the Ready Responder program, HRSA has few clinical positions. The vast majority of positions are multidisciplinary, so EHOs should consider future openings. HRSA might be a good choice for the EHO who has been around a while and is looking for a new challenge in a nontraditional setting. HRSA provides excellent opportunity for the EHO looking to gain or enhance management experience.

IHS – Indian Health Service

The Indian Health Service (IHS) is a major operating division within the Department. Approximately one third of all Commissioned Officers are stationed with IHS or assigned to a tribal program supporting the health of 566 federally recognized tribes across the United States. The EHO plays a critical role in meeting the mission of the IHS: *to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level*. Nearly 100 EHOs are employed by IHS, accounting for more than one quarter of the entire EHO category. The EHO in the IHS has unlimited career opportunities and professional experiences that are unrivaled within the PHS. Many EHOs begin and end their career within IHS, starting at field-based programs and rising to leadership roles at various locations and levels. The breadth of services provided by the IHS EHO is staggering. Whether conducting a rabies clinic in a remote village, leading an injury prevention initiative at the community level, or performing an industrial hygiene assessment of nitrous oxide exposures in a dental clinic, EHOs in IHS have many opportunities to gain experience and master their competencies.

Did You Know?

Nearly 100 EHOs are employed by Indian Health Service, accounting for more than one quarter of the entire EHO category.

The IHS EHO works within the Division of Environmental Health Services, which is a single entity with two additional focus areas: injury prevention and institutional environmental health.

<http://www.ihs.gov/dehs/>

The IHS is divided among 12 geographical areas throughout the United States, administered by an area office at each site. The 12 areas are Aberdeen (Great Plains), Alaska, Albuquerque, Bemidji, Billings, California, Nashville, Navajo, Oklahoma City, Phoenix, Portland, and Tucson. IHS areas are further divided into service units (field locations), generally located on reservations and centered on or near a hospital or health clinic. Some areas have district EHOs that provide direct supervision to service unit

field staff. Staffing is normally related to program needs and is commensurate with the breadth and scope of environmental public health needs.

Most EHO positions in IHS provide direct services to tribes; however, many positions are detailed to tribal entities who manage their environmental health programs through contract or a compact with the federal government. This process is referred to as self-determination where the tribes have built capacity to administer their own programs. In some instances, tribal environmental health specialists exist, hired directly by the tribal entity. In other cases, Commissioned Officers are detailed to a tribal program and are supervised directly by the tribe. Throughout a career, many Officers in IHS experience multiple assignments, working directly for a tribe or working in a federally based program. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages. The bottom line is that there are many excellent opportunities for an EHO in IHS.

DOI and NPS – Department of the Interior and National Park Service

The Department of the Interior (DOI) is ironically full of people who work outdoors. Their mission includes managing federal lands, conserving natural and cultural resources, providing services to American Indians and Alaska Natives, managing dams and reservoirs, producing energy, and overseeing oil and gas production on the continental shelf. DOI manages one fifth of the land area of the United States (500 million acres) and hosts almost 500 million visitors per year with nearly 300 million of those to the National Park System.

There are currently about 50 PHS Officers assigned to DOI. While a few industrial hygienists are assigned to agencies such as the U.S. Geological Survey or the Fish and Wildlife Service, most EHOs are housed within the NPS. The NPS has hosted PHS Officers since 1918 and has about a dozen EHO billets. Duty with the NPS involves many specialized and hazardous activities and environments such as wildland and structural fire prevention and suppression; recreational, drinking water, and wastewater issues; heavy equipment and vehicle safety, food and vectorborne disease outbreak investigations; dangerous wildlife; and industrial hygiene programs. Most EHOs assigned to NPS are mid-career professionals with broad experience. Though some larger parks like Yosemite have O-4 billets, most EHOs are in 0-5 regional consultant assignments. Assignments within “America’s Crown Jewels” are precious – EHOs tend to stay in place and often retire from these career-capping assignments.

NIH – National Institutes of Health

Among the approximately 30,000 employees on the self-contained campus of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, MD, are hundreds of Commissioned Officers. EHOs within the Division of Occupational Health and Safety and the Division of Environmental Protection account for about 10 of these positions. While NIH is famous for researching the next vaccine, you will have an opportunity to research the researcher. Supported by Ph.D. level coworkers this can be the opportunity for you to learn the specialized field of biosafety. If that idea does not grow on you, EHOs at NIH also carry out more traditional health and safety duties associated with industrial and construction operations. NIH is admired by the public and supported by Congress so you can expect opportunities and funding for training and professional development. There are entry level, mid-career, and supervisory billets available for occupational health specialists, safety professionals, hazardous waste managers, and industrial hygienists, but few opportunities exist for traditional environmental health practice. If Bethesda is too close to the beltway for you, NIH also has laboratories in Research Triangle Park, NC, Fort Detrick, MD, and Hamilton, MT.

OS – Office of the Secretary (Health and Human Services)

There are tremendous numbers of potential assignments at all grades for EHOs within the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Services. These opportunities are predominately within the ASH or the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR). The former includes assignments within the OSG and Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness, while the latter are often Officers who work in emergency preparedness and response (e.g., Regional Emergency Coordinators). The experiences, connections, and knowledge you gain in a headquarters assignment can launch your career in a new direction, but beware, as it can be difficult to break back into environmental health practice if you spend too many years recruiting reservists or processing calls to active duty.

PSC – Program Support Center

EHOs within the Program Support Center (PSC) are located within Federal Occupational Health (FOH). Federal Occupational Health has fewer than a dozen billets, about half in Washington DC and the rest scattered across some of the DHHS Regional cities. EHOs assigned here will provide consultation services to other federal agencies so you will develop a network of federal health and safety contacts outside of DHHS – valuable for that post-Corps job search. Although the focus is occupational health, you will get opportunities to do some broader environmental health activities such as food and water sanitation. Junior Officers looking to get their feet wet will get plenty of hands-on field experience, while mid-career Officers will pick up valuable project management and acquisition skills. It's a great place for Officers who like to market their skills because they'll need to sell themselves and their services. Federal Occupational Health has no budget appropriation and is totally funded with direct service work for other federal agencies. Congressional budget cuts and government shutdowns can make a wild, yet exciting ride. Talk to an EHO who is working for, or has worked for, FOH for the lowdown.

USCG – United States Coast Guard (Department of Homeland Security)

Almost every EHO who has been assigned to the USCG calls it their *best assignment ever*. You will use phrases like *two-blocked* and *belay my last* and you will never again be uncomfortable on a military base. At some point you will splash through the surf in a motor life boat, steam for days or weeks aboard a USCG cutter, and take a flight on a helicopter. You will take on responsibilities that may dwarf those of your fellow EHOs back in DHHS, but don't complain about the travel and workload – you will be surrounded by thousands of *Semper Paratus* (Always Ready) Coasties running just as hard. A typical day may find you inspecting the galley on base, evaluating the ventilation in an industrial shop, conducting HAZWOPER training at a small boat station, or monitoring lead exposures at a firing range. There are generally about a dozen junior Officer billets, but just a few O-5 and O-6 slots. When the time comes to return to DHHS it can be a bumpy transition from the straightforward command and control of the USCG (*your relief will arrive in 30 days and may even overlap your tour for a week or two*) compared to the collaborative consensus management often found within DHHS (*we hope to make a decision by the end of the year*). The lyrics to the official USCG marching song are available at

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semper_Paratus_\(march\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semper_Paratus_(march))

Did You Know?

The official Coast Guard marching song (Semper Paratus) was written by a Coast Guard Captain but the musical score was created with the help of ¹two PHS Dental Officers.

Closing

Our professional training as EHOs includes a wide range of topics from water quality and hazardous waste management to vector-borne diseases and injury prevention. Our category includes researchers, regulators, and practitioners with many different degrees, certifications, competencies, and experiences. We serve in duty stations all over the nation and even overseas. Many EHOs have found positions outside of traditional environmental health roles such as leadership positions, chief executive Officers, program directors, and administrators. There are even EHOs who have made their way into the Department of Agriculture, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Bureau of Prisons. The opportunities for an EHO within the PHS Commissioned Corps are nearly limitless. So when it is time to look for that next assignment, remember these words of wisdom:

“⁵You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the one who'll decide where to go...”

Acknowledgements:

The following individuals are gratefully acknowledged for their contributions to the operating division and agency specific information contained in this chapter: LCDR Eva D. McLanahan, LCDR Jason Mangum, CAPT Marshall Gray, CAPT John McKernan, CDR Derek Newcomer, CAPT Dale Bates, LT Michelle Dittrich, CDR Keith Schwartz, and CAPT Ed Vazquez.

⁵ Geisel, Theodor Seuss. *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* New York: Random House, 1990

Chapter 4 – How to Put Your Best Foot Forward When Working With Other Services

By
LCDR Elena Vaouli

Contributions by CDR Tim Jiggins, CDR Carrie Oyster, and CDR Jacob Wamsley

At some point in your PHS career you may be assigned, or elect to serve with, one of our other six sister services. If you are having trouble naming what those other six uniformed services are, then read this chapter. If you still get anxiety about being around other military service members or walking around a military base while in uniform, then read this chapter. If you plan to follow in the footsteps of many other EHOs and one day fill a billet with another uniformed service, then read this chapter. If you hope to one day deploy with a PHS response team, then read this chapter. If you don't fit any of these descriptions, you should still read this chapter as a refresher or source of critical information.

Why?

Remember, you are a United States PHS Commissioned Corps Officer. You are an official representative of the PHS. You are always on display. Other services will look at you and judge you, and judge the entire Corps, according to your knowledge, actions, and military bearing. Not to mention, you may get called upon to work as part of a joint operations team that include military Officers or enlisted personnel.

There are endless resources and formal guidance for learning military service protocol. Every one of us gets a dose of this training in Officer Basic Course (OBC) (and for the more senior EHOs, Basic Officers Training Course [aka BOTC]). Most, if not all, PHS Professional Advisory Committees (PACs) and Advisory Groups also provide training on intraservice interactions. But beyond learning about different service ranks and insignia, how to properly salute, flag etiquette, or even how to design your business card, oftentimes it's the little things not taught that leave you hanging. The best you can do is be astute, read as much as you can, but most importantly, be observant and adept at situational awareness so you can become expert at that *just in time* training.

Not “if” but “when”...

As PHS officers, the question is not “if,” but “when” you find yourself in a situation where you are amidst other uniformed service members. You will want to know how to put your best foot forward and represent yourself and the Corps to the best of your ability. (CAPT Tina Lankford)

Joint Service Situations

What situations might you find yourself in where you would be required to work with other uniformed services? Here are a few:

- PHS EHOs assigned to the USCG – Approximately 5% of all active duty EHOs are serving assignments with the USCG, in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Most USCG billets open to EHOs are entry level and/or for junior Officers. Historically, there are only two 0-6 billets for EHOs in the USCG (Alameda, CA, and Washington DC).
- PHS EHOs deployed on joint service missions with Department of Defense (DoD) services – EHOs serve on a multitude of PHS response teams, and fill both traditional EHO roles (e.g., safety, preventive medicine, environmental health) and nontraditional roles (e.g., administrative, financial, logistics support). All EHOs are expected to maintain readiness in anticipation of deployment activation at any time. More often than not, deployed PHS Officers can expect to serve on joint service missions with DoD service members.
- Interservice trainings/conferences – You may find yourself at a training or conference where audience members comprise other uniformed service members in uniform. Joint service training scenarios can include the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) - or ASPR-hosted tabletop exercises. At some point, you may attend the annual Commissioned Officers Foundation (COF) Scientific & Training Symposium, or present at the annual Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS) conference as many PHS Officers have before. Uniformed service members attend these conferences.

The Uniformed Services Of The United States:

So what are the other uniformed services? Let's start with the basics. There are seven uniformed services of the United States. Yes, seven! Most people know of the four armed forces of the DOD. Did you know there's a fifth armed force? Did you know there are two noncombatant forces? Read the cheat sheet below for a quick overview:

| Uniformed Service | Acronym | Federal Executive Department | Date Established | Type of Force |
|--|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Army | USA | Defense | 14 Jun 1775 | Armed |
| Navy | USN | Defense | 13 Oct 1775 | Armed |
| Marines | USMC | Defense | 10 Nov 1775 | Armed |
| Air Force | USAF | Defense | 18 Sept 1947 | Armed |
| Coast Guard | USCG | Homeland Security | 4 Aug 1790 | Armed |
| Public Health Service Commissioned Corps | PHS CC | Health and Human Services | 4 Jan 1889 | Noncombatant |
| National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Corps | NOAA Corps | Commerce | 22 May 1917 | Noncombatant |

Working With Other Ranks

Now that you have an idea of what the seven uniformed services are, how do you work with the other services? Keep reading.

Officers in other services: Officers in other services are used to calling the shots. The waters get muddied on who truly calls the shots when on a joint-services mission with varying Officer ranks and multiple layers of commands. For example, in one unit you may find an O-6 who is in charge of the Field Sanitation Team, but who falls under the command of an O-5 who is in charge of the overall Preventive Medicine Section. PHS Officers, fortunately, may be a little more accustomed to this organizational arrangement than Officers from our sister services. Be prepared to deal with situations where senior Officers serving subordinate roles may have trouble relinquishing command to less senior Officers, and make sure you're not one of the offenders! You might find yourself on a mixed team of Officers and enlisted ranks from other services, and there may be weird dynamics that you must be aware of, and to which you must constantly adapt. Also, be aware that ranks carry power, and enlisted personnel will still tend to observe seniority. Don't make confusing situations more confusing, but rather find diplomatic and discreet ways to clarify the lines of authority. If you don't know, seek advice with humility!

The Chief - E7 or higher (the following is an excerpt from ⁶LT Christian's Blue Book)

The Chief (or Staff Sergeant First Class, Master Sergeant or Gunnery Sergeant) is the most experienced and valuable person in your department. Although junior to you in rank, any chiefs have a wealth of experience, maturity and expertise dealing with people. You should recognize and utilize those attributes to the utmost. A chief can be invaluable during both initial orientation to the department and in the day-to-day operations of the department.

Senior petty Officers traditionally complain that junior Officers usurp their duties. As much as your chief can help you, almost any chief can also sink you like a rock. Be careful not to overstep your responsibilities and take over the details of supervision, which they usually handle very well. By stripping away a chief's authority, you can easily force a stereotype or you could say reinforce or trigger unhealthy work environments or behavioral response --- the chief retiring to the CPO [Chief Petty Officer] mess to drink coffee -- before you realize what you have done. Get to know your chiefs well, understanding the personal capabilities, background, and experience that go into becoming a chief. And afford your chiefs the same special "trust and confidence" that your seniors expect from you. This is NOT fraternization. Allow your chiefs to do the appropriate job, but check references, ask questions, and be skeptical. A good chief will respect your desire to learn and accept your leadership.

Tip: *Don't let your rank get in the way of your pride—be open to hearing advice and suggestions; this is critical to gain respect from your subordinates.*

Tip: *You should review your references for rank for the service you will be working with. A Master Chief Petty Officer (E-9) in the USCG is not the same as a Master Sergeant (E-7) in the Air Force (Wamsley). Check out [Appendix A](#) – U.S. Military Enlisted Rank Chart.*

⁶ LT Christian's Little Blue Book. An Unofficial Guide for US Navy Shipboard Medical Officers, Original Edition: 1984

Warrant Officers: In between enlisted ranks and Officers is an additional category of service members called Warrant Officers. The most important thing to know is they are Officers. They are rated as an Officer above the senior most enlisted ranks, but below the Officer grade of O-1. You can distinguish them from other Officers as their collar insignia pins and Officer stripes on shoulder boards and sleeves have colored bars that cut through the gold or silver. Warrant Officers are set apart from

enlisted ranks because they possess exceptional technical knowledge and skills in a particular specialty. Warrant Officers are selected from within the enlisted ranks of their respective service. They serve as technical experts and are looked to for their valuable skills, guidance, and expertise. Warrant Officers can be appointed by “warrant,” and approved by the Secretary of their respective service. They may also be commissioned by the President, and are referred to as Chief Warrant Officers. You should note that the Air Force does not use the Warrant Officer grade, and USN and USCG only use Warrant Officer grades of W-2 and higher.

Personal EHO account:

While on one joint DoD-PHS land-based mission, I served as our site environmental health and safety officer. I was assigned to work directly with the safety and security unit of the Army National Guard. This unit included one staff sergeant (E-6) and several specialists. Their focus was more on the security aspects of the mission. I was instructed by the joint command to work with the unit to do routine safety and security sweeps of our facilities. I thought I could go directly to the E-6 to relay this new work task. Lucky for me, he very politely asked if we could walk over to his NCO, a Sergeant Major (E-9), to give him a heads up. I was surprised at first when the SGT Major told me that I have permission to take them with me on the sweeps, and then later realized what I should have done. Fortunately, I had a cool E-6 who could see the error of my ways and rather than complaining to his NCO about me and my ignorance, he found a more tactful way to educate me.

Remember that when working with Warrant Officers, they are Officers and should be accorded the same and full respect, recognition, and treatment as given any other Officer. Although Warrant Officers rank just below an O-1, it is considered disrespectful (and distasteful) to refer to them as junior Officers – they are not. They have attained the rank of Warrant Officer through experience, years of service, proven professionalism, and high-level skill, and as such, have great pride in their designation as warrant Officers. Esteem and recognize their rank accordingly.

Enlisted Ranks (See [Appendix A](#) for charts of ranks and insignias for enlisted personnel)

Be aware that DoD has very explicit standards of conduct for how enlisted ranks and Officers interact. You should regard enlisted personnel by their rank and last name when on-duty and in work settings. If you are rendered a salute by an enlisted rank, you should return the salute or other action of commensurate courtesy. Know what you are doing; they will hold their salute until you are done with yours in return. Don't leave them hanging...

When you are assigned to work with enlisted personnel, realize they are trained to receive direction from their senior DoD enlisted Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO). You must respect the NCO's position of leadership over his/her enlisted subordinates. You are more likely to get cooperation from the NCO and the unit if you abide by this standard of conduct.

Establish a relationship with this NCO, indicate what work needs you have for his/her enlisted personnel, and let the NCO direct his/her unit to complete those tasks.

Fraternization

When working with other services, you will very likely work with Officer and enlisted personnel. As Officers of a uniformed service that has no enlisted ranks, we may not be familiar with the term fraternization. You must get familiar! Among DoD services, fraternization is a big deal, is taken very seriously, and is to be avoided at all costs because fraternization is a violation of Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).⁷ When assigned to and serving with the armed forces (including the USCG), PHS Officers are subject to the provisions of the UCMJ. The UCMJ provides for three different types of courts-martial: summary, special, and general. These forms of courts-martial differ in their make-up and the punishments that may be imposed.

What's considered fraternization? A personal or business relationship between an Officer and enlisted rank, or between a senior and junior Officer. Personal relationships can include friendship, dating, cohabitation, and any intimate or sexual relationship. In the Army, gambling between Officers and enlisted ranks is also a prohibited personal relationship. Business relationships can include loaning money and long-term business partnerships.

What's the big deal? Fraternization is considered prejudicial to good order and discipline. It can compromise chain of command; cause partiality or unfairness; can be exploitive or coercive in nature; and can have uncomfortable and adverse impacts on morale, authority, and mission accomplishment. If a violation is committed, you as the Officer are considered the accused offender under UCMJ, and are subject to punishment by court martial. Understand in the other services, fraternization can be a career ender for Officers. Thirty percent of the discharges from the USCG in 2013 were due to inappropriate relationships. Ask yourself is there any way that a photo of this could be construed by a jealous friend as inappropriate? Hugging is even uncomfortable. Consecutive meals with a lower ranking member of the opposite sex could be questioned. An officer is responsible for steering clear of ANY contact or comment that that could be taken in the wrong context. While perhaps not strictly practiced within all PHS professional circles, be conscious of your behaviors when working with other services because the consequences can be severe for you as an offender or participant.

So what should I do? Of course, this does not mean that you must keep yourself completely detached and reserved when associating with enlisted ranks or Officers of junior rank than yourself. Your challenge is to find the right balance so that you maintain professional, productive, comfortable, and appropriate relationships with your associates while on- and off-duty.

Alcohol: Alcohol consumption is not what it once was in DoD. Overconsumption was common and often a shared experience between service members of all ranks. A charge of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (DUI) as a DoD Officer is a career ender. Professionalism is the key as far as discipline and career are

Personal EHO Account:

While on a ship-based mission, we had two days of liberty. An O-3 went for dinner and drinks with a few of her enlisted colleagues. She was seen a few hours later being carried back by her colleagues after having too much to drink. Although I did not know the O-3 personally, her reputation was tarnished and she became the mission's next scuttlebutt (see "Shipboard Terminology" in [Chapter 5](#) for scuttlebutt note).

⁷ Fraternization is defined by the *Manual for Courts-Martial*

concerned. You may partake socially if you are responsible. If you accidentally overconsume, have a plan B. You are an Officer—do not overconsume alcohol.

Miscellaneous Tips:

- Praise down the chain-of-command and complain up the chain-of-command. Never complain to those under you about your command above you. You are a professional.
- Don't be afraid or too proud to ask for help. If you know your subject matter and present a good military bearing, it is not difficult to get assistance or a little directional guidance from your peers.
- Overdress. In meetings with others, if your appearance is shined and pressed, people will assume your work ethic is the same.
- Use the "Nightly News Test." Ask yourself if you will be okay with your actions if they were featured on the news that night. If you have doubts, reconsider your actions.

When "caught" (excerpt taken from article by CDC Office of Commissioned Corps Personnel Office on *Military Customs and Courtesies*)

- If confronted by a senior Officer about a remission in courtesy (whether true or not), it is advisable to stand at attention and receive the information offered without argument.
- When the senior Officer has finished, the service member should salute (if wearing cover), and deliver an appropriate reply, e.g., "Thank you, Sir/Ma'am, I stand corrected," holding the salute until it is returned, or the senior Officer departs.
- **Note:** It's best not to argue with a senior Officer and avoid potential disrespectful words rather than risk embarrassment. If corrected by a junior Officer, kindly and professionally thank them for their attention to detail. Never behave disrespectfully to subordinates when corrected, as it damages future credibility.

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4. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uniformed_services_of_the_United_States

Also consider the "U.S. Public Health Service Officer's Guide, Leadership, Protocol, & Service Standards," written by CAPT James E. Knoblen (Ret.) and CAPT Alice D. Knoblen. The book can be purchased at <http://www.coausphs.org/membership/publications/>.

Chapter 5 – What to Expect While on Deployment

By
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Contributions by CDR Luis Rodriguez, CDR Jacob Wamsley, and LCDR Racquel Williams

Among the endless work and PHS support activities you juggle every day as a Commissioned Corps Officer, on top of all that you must also be physically fit and ready to deploy at any time. That's not a lot to ask of PHS Officers considering the large majority, if not all of us, share the same passion and drive for providing public health services to the underserved, and for responding to the urgent and extraordinary public health needs of the American people and those abroad.

What is a lot to ask of PHS Officers, or rather expect, is that we be wholly schooled and confident in how we conduct ourselves while on deployment. Prior to your deployment, you will likely receive information and training material to better prepare you for the work and living conditions you will face while underway. Yet despite the wealth of information gleaned from this training material, or even from a 2-week intensive OBC, or from a thorough study of our Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual (CCPM), these guides are still no substitute for what real-world experiences can teach you about all the intricacies and nuances of life while on deployment.

To save you the embarrassment and humiliation of unknowingly or unintentionally committing a *faux pas* when on deployment, this chapter is designed to teach you what they don't or can't in other courses or guidance manuals. Following are a few tips and actual lessons learned from fellow PHS Officers who learned the hard way about what NOT to do, and about what to expect while deployed.

The below content is not meant to be exhaustive, rather, this chapter is one extra tool for you to better prepare yourself for avoiding unnecessary etiquette mistakes, or at the very least reducing the number of times you find yourself caught in a pickle.

Types Of Deployments

At some point during your career, by choice or direction, you may be deployed on one or more missions. Below are various types of deployments on which you may be sent:

Public Health Emergency Missions: Missions where multidisciplinary teams of PHS Officers are deployed to areas, domestic or foreign, following acute public health emergencies, including disease control and natural or man-made disasters. PHS teams provide clinical and public health support for local responding agencies. Depending on the nature, magnitude, and severity of the disaster and needs of the local authorities, PHS teams can serve mission assignments as brief as a few days to as long as several months. For recent examples, PHS teams mobilized to assist with response/recovery efforts as diverse as the 2014–2015 Ebola epidemic; 2014 unaccompanied minor immigration crisis; 2013 Boston marathon explosions; 2012 Operation Sandy Hook mental health support; 2012 Hurricane Sandy response; and the 2011 Japan earthquake/tsunami/nuclear crisis.

Ship-based Missions: Missions where multidisciplinary teams of PHS Officers are deployed aboard a USN vessel to assist in providing international humanitarian, public health, and environmental sustainability assessments for developing countries spanning Asia, Central and South America, and the South Pacific. PHS Officers provide medical, public health, and dental services support for the mission. They serve alongside fellow service members and public health professionals from the U.S.

Armed Forces and foreign partner nations. Missions *typically* are conducted over a 4-month period, with four different PHS teams serving separate one-month assignments. PHS teams have deployed on health diplomacy missions aboard the USS Peleliu (2007), the USS Boxer (2008), USNS Mercy (2008), and USNS Comfort (2007, 2009) in countries throughout Southeast Asia, the Western Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Land-based Medical Humanitarian Missions: Domestic missions where multidisciplinary teams of PHS Officers are deployed to remote areas of the United States to provide medical, public health, and dental services to underserved and isolated communities that lack access to routine preventative health and medical care. In the recent past, PHS Officers have deployed in support of Remote Area Medical (RAM) events in Oklahoma City, OK (2010, 2014), Pikeville, KY (2010), Pine Ridge Reservation, SD (2012), Rosebud Reservation, SD (2012) and Operation Lone Star Medical Missions along the Texas-Mexico border (2011, 2012).

What To Expect

Below are some words of advice offered by fellow PHS Officers while on deployment:

Dr. Jekyll/Officer Hyde Syndrome: Your first week on deployment will be a culture shock as the working environment may be much more in line with strict and formal military protocol than what you may be used to. You will be working in a high stress and demanding environment where your resiliency will be tested to the extremes. Be prepared to cope with adversity and adapt to challenges lest you succumb to the pressures. Many Officers have been surprised how the physical and mental stress can change their personalities. While deploying on a mission is exciting, it is not all fun and games. You will face stressful times, you may witness or experience friction with other Officers or enlisted personnel, and there will be plenty of personal and professional challenges. To stay sane, you must learn to roll with the punches, adapt quickly, learn from your mistakes and those made by others, and not to take criticism or reprimand personally. You will be sleep-deprived, out of your comfort zone, eating irregularly, and you may not be yourself. In fact, you may not realize that you have unintentionally offended someone, or vice versa, others may do things that offend you without any intended malice. Deployments can be worthwhile, career- and life-changing experiences but by their very nature, they are almost never easy. The more prepared you are for these personal and professional challenges, the more quickly and easily you will adjust and be able to forge ahead and focus on the mission.

“Two-Minute Shower” Rule: You will likely have to share shower facilities with many other people while on deployment. Because most people shower daily, or so you hope, you will find long lines of people waiting to bathe, especially during high use times (first thing in the morning, right before lights out at night). In these situations, you are expected to take very brief showers. You should be considerate of others and limit your time in the shower. Aboard a USN vessel, there is an unwritten yet understood “Two-Minute Shower” Rule. Your shower should take no longer than 2 minutes. Not only are long lines a factor, but water is limited on the ships. Be aware that people will knock if you go much longer than 2 minutes. If the knocking doesn’t work on you, being reported to your commander by unappreciative bunkmates will.

Bunking with others: Be prepared to sleep in unisex arrangements with limited to no privacy. Accept that people will snore, mumble, and do other annoying or embarrassing things unknowingly in their sleep. Trust that they are not doing these things intentionally, and would want to stop or likely be mortified to discover they have weird sleeping habits. Come prepared with a sleep mask and ear plugs to help you sleep through these minor sleep disruptions. And remember, you may also snore, mumble, and do other annoying or embarrassing things unknowingly in your sleep...

Mastering the “Two-Minute” Shower

Fortunately, there is a technique to the “two-minute shower” that can be perfected if under the gun. Essentially, you turn on the water, get wet, turn off the water, lather, turn on the water, rinse, turn off water, then exit the shower. This technique leaves no time for excessive beauty routines like deep conditioning, shaving, singing, or general relaxation. Ask an officer who has completed a ship-based mission for more specific details.

Communicating with the outside world: Do not expect to have ready access to traditional means of communication, like telephone and internet access, while on deployment. Depending on the type of mission you are on, security restrictions may preclude your ability to communicate with the outside world. Lower your expectations and raise your patience level. Computer access may be available while on deployment, but aboard ships there are usually long lines during high use times and bandwidth is often not that great. Some ships have phone booths for public use, but time is limited, long lines are also a problem, and conversations are not very private.

Pack for a mission, not a vacation: Pack only what you can carry or handle on your own. People may or may not help you, nor be available to help you. Expect that you will have to lug your bags on various modes of transportation (planes, trains, automobiles) where you will have to load and unload your own bags. If you end up on a ship, expect that you will need to carry all your bags through narrow hatches, and up and down steep ladders. You may even have to carry your bags while wading through shallow water in order to get to your ship. Personal storage space in your berthing areas is limited, and your berthing mates will likely not have additional storage space to share with you to accommodate all your excess

personal items. Remember, you are on a mission, not a vacation!

Learn from others: As should be apparent now after reading through this chapter, you have to talk to other PHS Officers to learn about what it’s like on deployment because you won’t find a lot of the information in training manuals and documents. When on deployment, make sure to pay attention to how others act and learn from what they do. Every ship, cutter, mission, and team is different so try and touch base with other Officers who were deployed before to get a better idea of what to expect.

Additional Tips

Dining Tips while on Deployment:

- Number one. Keep a snack in your pocket. You never know when your next meal will be.
- Take back-up protein/meal replacement bars in case meals or excessive meals, ready-to-eat (MREs) upset your stomach. Make sure to get fiber in the bars as well.
- Don't forget to drink plenty of water (bring your own refillable bottle if the local water is potable).
- Eat when you can, not when you want. You will be lucky to get three square meals a day that are to your absolute liking. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are served at certain times so if you miss it, you miss it.
- Some MREs are better than others, so choose wisely if you have a choice, and remember that MREs:
 - Are edible, but may not be enjoyable.
 - Are high in calories because they are designed to support the high levels of intense physical activity expended by military while out in the field. One MRE averages 1200–1300 calories. Be aware of this potential nutrition trap if you are served MREs while on training missions or PHS deployments that are not extremely physically demanding.
 - Are low in fiber and can lead to irregularity.
- Enlisted personnel eat in mess or chow halls. More recently, the Army refers to their mess halls as DFACs (dining facilities).
- USN and USCG Officers eat in Wardrooms.
- REMEMBER the Wardroom is under the purview of the Executive Officer (XO). There are rules for who sits where based on rank and time aboard, so ask before you sit. Never sit in the XO's chair, even if he or she is not present and you are the next highest ranking Officer.
- The Captain of the vessel generally has his or her own dining area and may join the XO and Officers for a formal Sunday meal.
- Do not sit down until the XO or Commanding Officer (CO) does so. If they arrive late and the meal has started, be prepared to rise in their honor.
- Do not begin eating until the highest ranking Officer begins.
- Officers do not eat in the enlisted mess or chow hall.
- Never wear headphones in the dining area aboard a ship. It is considered rude.
- Never place your cover on a table used for dining (or you may be buying the next round).
- A be in uniform when eating in the dining area.

Miscellaneous Tips:

- When on a ship-based mission, before you reach the dock to board the ship, you will probably have to pass through a security checkpoint on land. If you are in civilian clothes, when you show your ID and the guard salutes you, you should nod as a sign of acknowledgement. If you salute, you will look silly.
- No matter where you are staying while on deployment, you must always keep it clean. You must also expect to help keep your berthing area clean (i.e., sweeping, cleaning toilets and showers).
- Always make your bed! It is not uncommon to have random inspections of berthing areas.
- There is no such thing as "sleeping in" while on deployment. Even on your days off, you will probably still have to muster at the crack of dawn in uniform.
- If you have room in your pack, make sure to bring things to keep you entertained during your down time (i.e., books, tablets, earbuds).
- Bring a small flashlight. On most deployments, there will be a designated "lights out" time

where, regardless of what you are in the middle of, all main lights will be turned off in the evening to allow early sleepers to hit the hay. The flashlight will come in handy if you still want to read, go shower, etc. after “lights out.”

- Consider a headlamp with both white and red LED light bulbs. Keeps your hands free and the red light does not disturb others as much as a bright white light will.
- Grooming standards must be cut in half (time, that is. You must still meet standards).
- You do not need to iron your ODU, because on most deployments you will not have time nor equipment to do actual ironing. Make sure you hang and/or fold your ODUs in such a manner that they do not become overly wrinkled.

Helpful Terms To Know:

Shipboard and Select Military Terminology – Terminology you need to have understanding of when you come aboard or are around other services:

- ATE-UP – refers to a service member who is overly concerned with following every regulation to the letter, usually with little regard for the situation. Also used to describe a soldier/sailor who has little or no military bearing.
- BELAY – To secure a line by taking turns on a cleat. More commonly as an imperative, to stop. As in, “Belay that kind of talk!” Also, to *take back your last order* as in “Belay my last.”
- BIRD COLONEL – a Colonel (O-6), whose insignia is an eagle, as opposed to a Lieutenant Colonel (O-5), who wears silver oak leaves.
- BLACK WATER – Used water from toilets. This is a BIG problem when there is a leak.
- BRAVO ZULU – Means “Well Done”. Frequently used in correspondence to commend performance – such as BZ!
- BRISTOL – in good order, shipshape. Every detail attended to. From Bristol, England, where vessels were maintained with pride and distinction.
- BULKHEAD – any wall.
- CHENG – Chief Engineer.
- CHOW – Food. (e.g., breakfast, lunch & dinner).
- CLINICAL – Of or relating to a clinic where patients are observed or treated.
- DECK – the deck is the floor. Don’t call it the floor. Every sailor on board will look at you funny. Almost every lower horizontal surface is referred to as a deck.
- DIGIES – Refers to new digital camouflaged field uniforms worn by the U.S. Army, Marines, and USN.
- DOOR – On a ship, a door is a door. It separates one bulkhead from another. A door is not a hatch. Hatches go up or down.
- EO – Engineering Officer (not Executive Officer).
- FIELD DAY – Thorough cleanup of a barracks or duty area with the expectation of an inspection.
- GALLEY – the kitchen. Your official duties may include regular inspection of all galleys onboard.
- GEEDUNK – junk food, bought at ship’s store or from vending machines.
- GOAT LOCKER – Room or lounge reserved for Chief Petty Officers (E-7 and above). Those who are E-6 and below would do well to steer clear unless expressly permitted inside. Also used to refer to the Chief Petty Officers assigned to one command.
- GREY WATER – Used water from showers, laundry, and galley areas. Not as big a problem when there is a leak.
- GUNNY – A Marine Corps gunnery sergeant (E-7), a Naval Gunner's mate.

- HATCH – usually separates one deck from another deck. Hatches usually are considered to separate vertical areas; doors separate horizontal areas.
- HEAD – restrooms/toilets.
- HOOAH – A spirited cry, which can mean nearly anything positive. Also “Hoorah.”
- LADDER – actual ladders, and also ordinary stairs, are referred to as ladders.
- MRE – Meals, Ready-to-Eat.
- ODU – Operational Dress Uniform.
- OVERHEAD – the ceiling.
- PASSAGEWAY – hallway.
- PORKCHOP – the Supply Officer.
- SCUTTLEBUTT – the water fountain. This term also refers to shipboard gossip. Google why that is.
- SEABAG – Issue green canvas or cordura bag used to transport uniform and personal effects. Also, a reference to purchasing all approved uniforms (whole seabag).
- SHINY GUYS/SHINY – Officers.
- SQUARED AWAY – cleaned up; in military shape; ready for inspection. This is a good thing.
- STAND TALL – Used as a verb for *to be proud*, or *to present a military appearance*. Also can refer to having to answer to higher authority facing consequences: “Standing tall before the man.”
- STAY FROSTY – (U.S. Army, U.S. Marines) Regular term among soldiers to both *stay calm* and *stay alert*: “I’m not sure if these guys are friendlies or not. We might be walking into something here. Stay frosty”
- STRIPES – Enlisted rank insignia, especially E-4 and above (NCO) pay grades in leadership positions.
- WARDROOM – place where Officers eat their meals, relax, and socialize.
- WEPS – Weapons Officer.
- XO – Executive Officer (2nd in command).

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Chapter 6 – The Competent Environmental Health Officer

By
CAPT Richard Turner

Similar to all professions, the development of a solid and dynamic plan to master job competencies is critical for EHOs. Obtaining and maintaining competencies, knowledge, and credentials are vital components of an Officer's work life and can dramatically affect his/her ability to perform at a high level of professionalism. Additionally, the achievement associated with gained knowledge, skills, and the ability to apply them effectively provides serious professional and personal satisfaction. Gaining knowledge, experience, credentials, and skill sets contribute to the overall competency of the individual Officer – providing him/her with valuable qualities for promotion, increased opportunity, and confidence. *Most importantly, a competent EHO is a better public servant.* Never forget that you are a servant to the public and to their health. We owe them our best, and attaining optimal competencies is the least we should do.

On Being a Public Servant

Most importantly, a competent environmental health officer is a better public servant...

On Being Average: The average person is what? Well, the average person is... wait for it...average. Most of us don't stop to think about that, but when you do it is a sobering thought. The average car mechanic is average with average skills. The average airline pilot is average with average skills. Think about that when you take your car in for major repairs or board a flight to somewhere.

Even the average ⁸Mensa member is average. What is even more depressing is that half of any normally distributed population is *less* than average. Think about how populations are distributed statistically. *Hang on, this isn't going to be a statistical lesson or involve math, merely a slight deviation to illustrate a significant point.* The normal distribution of a population is manifested by the bell-shaped curve. So, if a population is distributed normally, it can be represented by the classic bell-shaped curve where the majority of the population *comfortably* resides in the middle. In fact, approximately two thirds of the population is within one standard deviation from the average. In the context of competencies, the outliers on one end are the best performers; the other end represents the worst performers. However, the bulk of everyone in the population is centered around the middle. Don't forget that half of that population is less than average. Sigh. And yes, the average EHO is average.

So, what are you going to do about it? On the competency scale, where do you want to be as an EHO? There are many things we manage in a career where we have to take the reins and lead ourselves. This is one of them – arguably the most important one. Only you can chose how competent you want to be and only you can make it happen. Sure, you will have help along the way, but your *competency destiny* is solely in your hands. Your supervisor(s) shouldn't care more about your career than you do; don't expect them to. Are you going to be comfortable being average? Do the people you serve – your

⁸ Mensa – sure they are all in the top 2% of the population in terms of IQ, but within their own group, the average Mensan is average... BTW, "Mensa" means table in Latin.

customers – want average? I can't imagine anyone starting out with a goal of "being average" and yet the average person is...you know... average.

On Being Average...

"I can't imagine anyone starting out with the goal of 'being average' and yet the average person is...you know...average."

Somehow they got there, comfortably lost on a road, along with the others, sharing the tall skies of the bell shaped curve. Let's assume though, that you want to excel in your profession, to have as an objective, a fantastic career where you do great things for the public's health. Competency development, learning, and maintenance should be a life-long goal. What you do about it now will likely frame your approach to it for the rest of your life and will define your ultimate value, effectiveness, success, and satisfaction as an EHO.

Competency – What it is, what it isn't: Let's talk about competency because that is what it is all about. Competency is generally defined as the *"ability to do a job properly."* By itself, a pretty unsatisfying definition. Don't mistake job competencies for knowledge or the duties and tasks associated with the job – they are not the same. The key is how thorough, how complete, how skilled, efficient and effective you are at doing the various elements of your job. Competencies include all the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes that define an individual's job. How well you do them – how competent you are – leads to superior job performance and can be used to set the standard against which success of the missions and objectives of your agency or program is measured.

What is your Brass Ring? Years ago, an EHO colleague and I were talking about achievement and goals within our profession. We had just actively and successfully participated in a *once in a lifetime public health experience* and were wondering if that was the pinnacle of our careers. I can't remember exactly how it developed, but we came up with a saying that I have had on my wall for the majority of my career. **"The Brass Ring isn't Waist High..."** Over the years, I have had many people ask me what that means – which is exactly the intent of putting it on my wall – to get some dialogue started on achievement. The brass ring represents the prize, the goal, the highest achievement. It originated in the late 19th century when people on the outer ring of a carousel had the opportunity to reach for and grab a metal ring as they went around and around. Most of the rings available were simple iron rings but one or two were made of brass. By successfully *grabbing the brass ring* they would win a prize. It was a challenge because it wasn't necessarily easy but it was worth attaining because you were⁹ rewarded for it. The challenge now is to *reach for the brass ring* – the highest level of achievement – because it has value and worth. The key word is *reach*. The brass ring isn't there for the ordinary, the average. It isn't waist high where everyone can grab it. You must stretch for your goal – your brass ring. Challenge yourself and follow through. Fail once, twice, three times, more, but keep at it. The brass ring is attainable if you want it bad enough. Defining your "brass ring" is the first step.

*"The Brass Ring isn't
Waist High..."*

⁹ Ok, so the prize was generally just another ride on the carousel, but that's not the point...

Accomplish it, and move on to your next brass ring. Repeat forever. So, our *once in a lifetime public health experience* was just one of the brass rings along the way.

Managing Your Supervisor: Dare I say it? The average supervisor is average. Unfortunately, for many Officers, waiting for their supervisor to proactively manage a viable continuing education program, develop a relevant training plan, and keep the best interests of the Officer's competence in mind are a fantasy. At best, it is an afterthought for many. For those Officers whose supervisors are dynamically involved with workforce development, more power to you. Remember that difference when you are charged with supervision. A little tip, don't forget to learn everything you can about the personnel systems in which your employees operate – whether it be the Commissioned Corps or Civil Service. If your employees are civilians, learn their system as well as you know yours – you owe them that as it affects their career, pay, potential for advancement, and ultimately their satisfaction on the job. Another thing, happy employees are better employees, meaning they will serve their customers better.

Attending training sessions and courses, in and of itself, is not the answer. There is no guarantee that an individual attending a training course has necessarily developed the competency or attained the objectives for the course. No, the answer is rooted in competency models. Your current job requires a certain level of expertise, knowledge, and skills to perform it properly. Your job can be defined by what competencies are necessary to do it and to do it well. Learning should be a lifelong process but too many people “learn” something once (generally the first time they were faced with it) and never progress beyond that initial knowledge. If they apply what they learned 5, 10, or 20 years before to what they are doing now, chances are they aren't serving their customers to the best of their ability. Keeping up with research, technology, evidenced-based practice, and current literature is crucial to maintaining competencies.

“The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled.”

What does that mean to you?

Simply learning facts and having knowledge isn't the end goal. Lots of people know lots of stuff.

Having a lifelong passion for learning, and using that knowledge, eliminates boundaries and blows the lid off the bell-shaped curve.

It has been my experience that supervisors frequently consider training to be something that it isn't: a reward, as bait, a nuisance, or a gift. Little thought is given to an organized approach. Many operating divisions throw money at training and use slick rationale like, “*We do a lot of food surveys, send the Lieutenant to the FDA course...*” This is the extent to which they go when forming the backbone of their individual development plans – not a lot of thought, not a lot of foresight. They are making the assumption that merely going to the training is the single most important consideration. Remember, knowledge by itself is not a competency. It serves as the foundation for competency development, but the ability to wisely apply that knowledge to make a public health difference is the desired competency. While the training may be valuable, is it exactly what meets the competency gaps of the good Lieutenant? There is no guarantee that simply attending the training gives the officer the necessary competency and

skills to be effective on the job. Yet, the average supervisor will make the assumption that the Lieutenant is now competent to do the task. A better scenario is for the Lieutenant to attend the course **AND** return to a structured evaluative environment where his or her supervisor assesses the needs,

The Expert...

“It is impossible to begin to learn that which one thinks one already knows.”

Epictetus

skills, and knowledge of the employee in completing effective food service surveys and provides guidance and instruction on any identified gaps.

Be Proactive In Your Competency Plan. Having a coherent and well thought out plan that your supervisor is part of, and approves of, will go a long way towards your success. Carefully identify what skills and competencies you need to be successful and discuss with your supervisor the best way to get there. Train your supervisor gently by developing your thoughts, plans, and ideas about where you want to go and how you are going to get there. If you are a

go-getter and your supervisor is intimidated by you (more likely annoyed...) consider that and manage him or her according to their style and likes and dislikes. Don't be afraid to dial down your overt enthusiasm if it gets in the way. I will never suggest that you not maintain a passion for excellence, but just remember your audience and their respective personalities. Explore Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® personality inventory (or other personality assessment tool) if you haven't already. It is a personal eye-opener. And remember, *your* personality may not be the gold standard you think it is. Acknowledge that there are other acceptable personalities than yours – different doesn't mean bad. If you think someone has a difficult personality to deal with, they probably feel the same way about yours. You will be a better Officer – a more competent Officer – if you have the agility to navigate successfully among different personalities. Getting a handle on your own may be the first step (just saying...).

Food For Thought...

If you think someone has a difficult personality to deal with, they probably feel the same way about yours...

Four Types of Learners: There are four types of individuals who attend training: ***Prisoners, Vacationers, Experts, and Searchers.*** What type are you? Most people are a combination of one or more. The ***prisoners*** are those individuals who HAVE to be at the training, not because they want to be. Frequently they have the worst attitude and as a result fail to learn anything of significance. The ***vacationers*** attend the training primarily because it is somewhere they want to be – the winter is long, the training course is in San Diego...enough said. They too, frequently learn little because their motivation is solely to escape to a “better place” and they can actually “justify” the course. The ***expert*** attendee sounds better than it is. These are the course “know-it-alls” who are going to prove it to fellow students and the instructor by revealing their great knowledge – *ad nauseum*. They don't know that they are missing key information because they aren't smart enough to listen. No one likes this person – don't be that person. The ***searcher*** is the individual attending the course for all the right reasons, is open to learning, and participates appropriately to maximize his or her knowledge. This is the type of student we all should strive to be. Regrettably, I have been all types, but have learned over the years to not take for granted the opportunity to learn something new regardless of whether I want to be there or not. An open mind allows for an opportunity to learn something new. Regardless of your motivation, get all you can get out of the experience and don't get in the way of others attending and learning.

Useless Stuff: Raise your hand if you know a lot of “useless stuff.” Since that was rhetorical, you can put your hands down now. We environmental health types tend to know a lot of things about a lot of subjects. I even found a quote by British philosopher Bertrand Russell that supports this perspective. *There is much pleasure to be gained from useless knowledge...* Okay, this isn’t the tangent you think it is. Spend some time investigating this concept. We should all be encouraged to know *useless knowledge*. It is in fact, not useless at all. It challenges the mind, enhances awareness, and it complements life. It is not trivial. The basic concept is that seemingly *useless* knowledge enhances what you know and lets you gain more pleasure in even the mundane. It is like spice on bland food. The spice may not be necessary for nutrition, but it can make all the difference in the experience. Let knowing *useless stuff* become a healthy obsession. Expand beyond your vocation and know *stuff* about your passions, hobbies, **and** about things that are important to other people who are important to you.

Applying Knowledge: The challenge is to *use* the knowledge you possess to improve performance and reach objectives. Just filling your head with a lot of information is not the same as using that knowledge effectively and efficiently and with some passion and purpose. Be passionate about knowledge and learning, and be equally passionate about using that information wisely. You will be surprised how easy it is to know things, and the use of that information will allow you to mature into a true expert. Check out quotes about knowledge. The overriding theme among them is that knowledge is nothing compared to experience and wisdom. Another primary theme is that the use of the knowledge is the true value. Knowing stuff is easy. It is not enough to just know. That is easy and arrogant. Once becomes competent through wisdom. Applying knowledge wisely to your vocation is a measure of competency and a sign of humility.

Humility: Which leads me to a valuable life lesson to share. Humility. What I would give to have learned this lesson many years ago. Think of any great supervisor or leader you have known – chances are they demonstrated appropriate humbleness or demonstrated humility routinely. That does not mean weak, far from it. The greatest people I have met and worked with are those that have some degree of true humility infused in their demeanor and personality. They weren’t arrogant or self-centered; they did not have all the answers, rather they encouraged others to contribute. Take a minute to think of those leaders and experts you have known that demonstrated humility and compassion; compare them with leaders and experts you know that were arrogant and intimidating. No contest. Humility is strength because it encourages and invites participation and allows better decisions and actions.

Consider various career opportunities to enhance competency. Don’t expect the new agency to conform to your prior experience but be flexible. Gently incorporate your relevant experience into what you can in the new organization if it will truly benefit. Please don’t start any sentence with, “*Well, the way we did it in [insert name of previous duty station] was...*” Trust me, no one cares and they will talk about you behind your back (and not in a good way).

It is not enough to just “know.” That is easy and arrogant. One becomes competent through wisdom. Applying knowledge wisely to your vocation is a measure of competency and a sign of humility.

Career Catalyst

Don't forget to energize your personal competency development by infusing your future plans with your dreams and aspirations.

Dream Big and Have Flexible Plans. Don't forget to energize your personal competency development by infusing your future plans with your dreams and aspirations. This adds a catalyst to your career and is a serious motivator. What do you want to do down the road? Are you interested in a specialty within the field of environmental health? Do you want a certain certification, license, or credential? Having a road map is the key to achievement. A well thought out plan can be extremely useful when making decisions. Remember too, that things change. Don't stay on a road just because you designed it years before. That is why there are exits, on-ramps, and rest stops. This is supported by the enduring quote by General Dwight D. Eisenhower, President of the United States: "¹⁰*Plans are worthless, but planning is everything.*" You've heard that before I'm sure. The important thing to remember is that a plan is an exercise that forces you to put down on paper something defined. However, we all know that strict adherence to policies, procedures, and plans are sometimes impossible and unrealistic. If we have been thinking however, and planning for contingencies, and are open and flexible to opportunity, we have the best chance of adapting to those changes or opportunities and channeling or restructuring our energy into something we recognize and adopt as our own. Most of us like change as long as we are the authors of it. However, don't miss out on the opportunity to grow and mature when confronted with change that is not of your design. It may be the best thing for you because it may open new doors of opportunity or get you out of the rut you didn't know you were in.

You will be exposed to many opportunities as your career advances; things you never knew existed, or thought you'd have an interest in. Flexibility is a crucial component in any plan. Don't be afraid to modify your plan or roadmap when you are faced with new information, new situations, challenges, or obstacles. The trick is to not let anything derail your ultimate objectives. Check out the next paragraph on vision boards.

Vision boards. Reflect on those things you wish to attain – personal and professional and put them on a vision board – maybe it is a document file, maybe it is an actual board or poster, but it reflects what you want to have happen. There are even apps for vision boards (of course there are...). If it is a credential you want, put your name with that credential after it and use it to *visualize your successful future*. Go ahead and mix your personal and professional goals on the vision board. Don't forget that life is a balance. Your vision board will be more effective if it helps you achieve that balance. **Remember too that the visions and goals on the board may be years in the making so it is okay if you laminate it.**

¹⁰ Remarks at the National Defense Executive Reserve Conference, 11/14/57

Use a Vision Board

Put down on paper what you want to achieve – both personally and professionally. Look at it constantly and let it inspire you to accomplish your goals.

Consider the absurd. I like to take credit for old tired clichés that I know people know I didn't invent, but I did come up with a statement that helps when making difficult decisions. *Consider the absurd.* The basic premise is that we are often faced with options or decisions we think are too difficult to make and frequently we don't fully embrace the options before us because they are too *absurd*. Are they? Well, consider the "absurd." Try fully embracing the options no matter how crazy, unrealistic, or absurd they seem to you at first. Move to Alaska? Leave Alaska? Leave your hometown? Change agencies? Take a job or assignment that intimidates you? When you realistically embrace the notion and weigh all the pros and cons, it forces you to accept what you truly *are willing* to do. Maybe even the absurd. It might just be the best decision you ever make.

Conclusion: You have embarked on an amazing journey with amazing colleagues and a public that is in great need of your *competent* services. This journey can take you places you may never have dreamed of. We are gifted with many opportunities in life and being an Officer in the PHS is truly reserved for the few. Make the most of those opportunities and never lose sight of where you are along the way – in terms of attitude, effectiveness, and competencies. As you come to the end of this chapter, remember the overriding messages:

- ✓ Your competency destiny is in your hands alone.
- ✓ A competent Officer is a better public servant.
- ✓ We are always servants to the public's health.
- ✓ Consider the absurd.

Go and do great things!

Chapter 7 – Managing Your Career – It’s a Full-Time Job!

By
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Contributions by CDR Jill Shugart, CDR Jacob Wamsley, and CAPT Richard Turner

Successful Officers embody a well-roundedness that represents service, responsiveness, involvement, mentorship, competency, readiness, leadership, and overall Officership.

Your future success as a Corps Officer depends on your ability to manage and build upon your skills, lead others, and align with goals of the service. How will you know how to do this and how will this be judged? The purpose of this chapter is to explain the importance of organizational skills needed to manage your career and your file (personal records and official personnel file [OPF]).

Recordkeeping: You must act like you are your own supervisor and must not only promote, but protect yourself! Just like with the IRS, the burden is on you to prove and validate your position. This may pertain to anything from expenses, leave, and certain work projects. These files you may maintain at home for multiple years if it helps for safekeeping – however some jobs and duty assignments may restrict what files you maintain outside the work environment so make sure you meet OPDIV requirements. Don’t discount the great experience and training you have had by *tossing your files* as you may find yourself in the same field, supervising others, or providing technical assistance on that same work in the future. Consider yourself your own agent and secretary by always looking out for your next opportunity, keeping good records, and protecting yourself by always having evidence-based or leadership backing.

Maintenance of Your Officer Personnel File: Your OPF is THE record of your career. As you build your OPF, you build the story of your career. The impression your career choices and successes has on your promotion board is completely in your control. Make sure they understand the amazing Officer you are and the important work you do by ensuring your OPF accurately reflects your experiences and accomplishments. Be proactive in maintaining and updating your OPF according to regulations and requirements. What is in your file is *what you are* to those who may review it. See below for the section on *Managing Your Official Personnel File*.

Managing Your Career: What you need to mind professionally to stay competitive with your peers and become a meaningful and competent EHO are:

Mastering the EHO Benchmarks: These are the gold standards set by the EHO professional advisory committee and outlined step-wise by rank. Use this to help you set your goals and future career plans. How you meet those benchmarks is how the promotion board will evaluate you. Check them out at the following link:

<https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/eo/resources.aspx>

Certifications: Regardless of the path you choose within the field of environmental health, there are many opportunities for specialized paths. It is important to hone your skills while not losing the foundational abilities of REHS/RS through continuing education. Pursuing additional certifications will only enhance your competencies and improve your ability to deliver high quality, specialized service to the public.

Assignments: Your selection of assignments should provide for increasing experiences and leadership opportunities. While mobility is important, work to build your expertise from many perspectives such as applied field work, training, research, and policy. As you build your competency, it is important to share that knowledge through publications. Several practice-based journals exist to describe functions, roles, and projects for EHOs in federal and state level government.

Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report: The COER is our yearly performance evaluation. These are critical to be in your OPF and on time or it may result in a “not recommended” decision from the promotion board. While there is a timeline for which your supervisor is responsible, ultimately it falls on you and you will be accountable if your COER is missing for any given year. If you have continual problems with your supervisor when it comes to timelines or supportive scores, sadly, it may be better to cut your losses and look for another position. Time and again, EHOs have “stuck it through” waiting for change only to find themselves behind the curve. Move on, as there are plenty of opportunities and places where you will be valued. Overall COER scores generally average 5–7 and a lot depends on your grade/rank and level of responsibility. Officers are not compared with one another but are to be graded on their specific position, grade, and the work that is expected at that level—not the most senior EHO in the group. These are individual Officer scores.

Deployments: Opportunities within your agency or with the Readiness and Deployment Operations Group (RedDOG) – formerly ¹¹Office of Force Readiness and Deployment (OFRD) provide a great opportunity to build your career and develop as a more seasoned Officer. While many of these deployments are typically voluntary, be careful when passing the opportunity up. Deployments are limited and a missed opportunity may create a void in your curriculum vitae (CV) or OPF that others in your peer group have benefitted from. Look forward to these great experiences and seek as much training as possible on various emergency response incidents from local community or FEMA.

Managing your Official Personnel File: Well-deserving Officers are often passed over for promotion because they fail to understand the importance of managing the content of their OPF. Officers who spent months deployed in austere conditions or have conducted solid work for several agencies may still be unsuccessful when up for promotion. This appears to be unfair when our fellow Officers, who we know work so hard, are passed over.

However, if you find yourself in this position in the future, don't assume you will have next year. There will be a new set of Officers you will compete with the following year, and the bar keeps rising. Don't just sit and *wait your turn*, or for the passage of time, or for people to retire. The take-home message is the proactive management of your OPF is the key to successful career advancement. Setting up a system and having the personal discipline to maintain it should be your primary goal. This mechanism will bolster your chances when competing for that next promotion or making that next career move.

Whether you are up for promotion the first time, or competing with a subsequent attempt, find a trusted colleague and have him or her review your OPF looking for things that “stand out.” Don't stop there; call on a second and third reviewer for your file for something that they may have missed. The Environmental Health Officer's Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC) also offers Officers the

¹¹ Prior to OFRD, it was CCRF – Commissioned Corps Readiness Force (you may still see reference to this).

opportunity to sign up for a senior Officer to review their file and counsel Officers who are up for promotion. Take advantage of your active EHOPAC and the services they provide.

Don't overlook any small technicalities or details that are missing from your file. Too much of the time it is something missing or not following something as simple as the CV format prescribed. Remember, promotion boards review hundreds of files and CVs, and they do not appreciate a "unique" new CV format because the information they *have* to find to successfully rank an Officer is not where they expect it to be. You will stand out for sure, but not the way you want to.

Take Home Message:

Proactive management of your OPF is the key to successful career advancement.
Setting up a system and having the personal discipline to maintain it should be your primary goal.

Importance of the Curriculum Vitae: Having a CV is extremely important to your career and is something that you should *always* keep updated. It can help you track all of your training, credentials, and progress towards meeting your career goals. As mentioned before, the CV *must* be in the format approved by the EHOPAC as the promotion board will expect every Officer to comply with it, and they count on it during promotion board activities.

THE CV Format is on the EHO Professional Advisory Committee site:

<https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/eo/resources.aspx>

Following the EHO benchmarks and ensuring that all sections of your OPF are completely up-to-date is paramount. Every year, make sure you submit new and dated records that support each of the following sections of your OPF and that this information is reflected in your CV.

TIP:

Make it a point to update your critical documents, such as the CV and continuing education list, annually, even if you are not up for promotion. You will be surprised how quickly it can get outdated. Pick a day or two each year, put it on your calendar, and make it happen. Review your OPF for accuracy at this time and take action.

Awards: Strive for an individual award nomination each year to culminate your great work. Reality suggests this won't happen at that frequency. But, when the opportunity affords itself, take the initiative. As your rank increases, compile larger themes of work for greater awards and impact.

Remember however, that your motivation to do a good job should not be getting awards. Do good work and then it is reasonable to expect them. When considering awards, you cannot be modest when it comes to writing. Depending on your supervisor, work environment, and the award culture of your OPDIV, a high percentage of the time, you may need to draft and manage the submittal of your awards. Don't be disgruntled about that. It doesn't mean you aren't appreciated but you are the best person to represent yourself. Many of our supervisors are civil service and do not recognize the urgency and critical nature of the award process. It's upon us to train them how the Corps personnel system works, while also minding your own career.

Develop a Healthy Award Culture in Your Organization: When you supervise or observe fellow Officers who are doing great things, remember to recognize them in the award process. The Officers can be outside your chain of command and can be in another category. Do not be part of the problem – help develop a healthy award culture in all of your assignments.

Billets: Billets are the actual position you are filling. For promotions, it is optimal to be in the billet grade for the rank you are seeking. For example, an O-4 should be serving in an O-5 position to enhance promotion opportunity. Promotions are becoming extremely competitive and in all categories you won't be as competitive, or likely successful, if you are not in a billet grade higher than your current rank. Therefore, it is important to factor this in your decision making process and seek higher responsibility each time you change your duty station. If you are up for promotion and you are not in a higher billet grade, you will need to compensate for this by exceptional performance, projects, accomplishments, Officership, duties, and committee involvement and ensure they are noted in your CV. The truth is, you should be doing all those things for the public's health, not for your promotion; look for advanced positions and higher billets and keep on moving up.

The Officer's Statement and the Reviewing Official's Statement: These two documents are only required of an Officer when they are in a promotion cycle. It cannot be stressed enough, how important these documents are to your career success. The Officer's Statement (OS) is the responsibility of the Officer up for promotion, while the Reviewing Official's Statement (ROS) is the Reviewing Official's responsibility. However, Officers are responsible to ensure that they are both in their OPF.

OS Details: If you fail to include an OS in your file the year you are up for promotion, you will likely be "Not Recommended" immediately and will not successfully compete. Why? It is totally

your responsibility to complete it and failure to do so tells the board you are not committed to your career. Why should they care more about your career than you do? The OS is your opportunity to “speak” directly to the board. It has a specific format that must be followed but it provides Officers with the opportunity to highlight their attributes, duties, accomplishments, and goals. It is critical to get it right. Take up the whole page! If you have a couple of sentences only, it sends the wrong message – that your entire value to the Corps and public health only takes a couple of sentences to summarize.

ROS Details: The ROS is a very important document that can greatly assist an Officer’s chances of promotion if completed correctly. It goes without saying (yet we will…) but the ROS should reflect your true value to the organization, not serve as a tool to get an average Officer an upper hand or to make up for other deficiencies. Don’t expect the ROS to provide you with glowing compliments and recommendations if you aren’t doing commensurate work. On the other hand, if you are doing great things, the ROS should reflect that and it may take some tactful input from you and your supervisor to ensure that the ROS reflects what you want it to reflect. Let’s make sure we understand something: your supervisor is the Rating Official on your COER and their direct Supervisor is the Reviewing Official. Based on the nature of your organization, the Reviewing Official may not even know you. Strategize with your Supervisor and coordinate the drafting of the ROS so that it reflects your true value. Many times, the ROS is written by the Supervisor (with input from the Officer – you) and forwarded up the chain. The Reviewing Officials typically like this so that they don’t have to write it. The ROS should also take up the whole page!

The bottom line? The OS and the ROS should support and complement one another. If the OS (written by your generous hand) does not reflect the messages in the ROS, then we have a problem. It sends mixed messages to the Promotion Board and casts doubt on the value of the Officer they are reviewing. For truly problematic Officers, the ROS is a very valuable and useful tool to correct an Officer’s behavior and performance. Never let your career get to the point where that correction is necessary.

The Promotion Board Process: The PHS Commissioned Corps promotion board for EHOs is a five-member panel made up of 0-6 EHOs. A common misunderstanding is that the board is made up of permanent 0-6 Officers, but that is not true. Captains that hold the temporary rank of 0-6 are also board eligible. The Captains represent not only the various agencies, but race and gender as well.

Before the start of every promotion board, the 0-6 Officers making up the board, stand at attention in their service dress blues (generally before a Flag Officer), with their right arm raised and take an oath to represent themselves with honor and integrity and to fulfill their duties in a manner as prescribed by the rules of the board. This formality establishes the solemnness and responsibilities of the board and infuses each Officer with a sense of profound duty. It is a humbling and honorable experience.

An Officer from within the Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness provides guidance, oversight, and governance to the promotion process. This Officer charges the board with specific duties and identifies the processes to accomplish the tasks. This Officer is available and ready to answer any questions or provide clarification as necessary and is available to the board at all times.

The board reviews a subset of each Officer’s OPF during the process (e.g., promotion information report [PIR], CV, Awards, COER history) where they can get the majority of the information necessary for ranking each Officer. Be aware that the board members can dig very deeply into an Officer’s OPF if they feel compelled to search for information or need to clarify issues. Prior to

reviewing the hundreds of files, the board discusses the EHO benchmarks and how they will apply them to the ranking process. The board agrees on the proposed model and mechanism to rank Officers and then proceeds to review the file of each Officer who is up for promotion. Each individual board member independently reviews each file and applies a numerical score for each of the following areas (the percentage listed after each, defines how much it is weighted against the whole):

- Performance rating and ROS (performance): 40%
- Education, training, and professional development: 20%
- Career progression and potential: 25%
- Professional contributions and services to the PHS Commissioned Corps (Officership): 15%

Scores are aggregated and any outlier results are discussed in a formal manner to ensure board members applied the mechanism accurately and each Officer is afforded consistent and fair treatment. Once the board agrees that the rank lists are accurately completed, it is a done deal and a line is drawn on the list to identify those successful Officers.

The good news for Officers is that it is a fair and objective process. What does this mean to you? If you manage your career appropriately and work to meet the benchmarks while doing outstanding work and documenting it in your OPF and on your CV, you stand an excellent chance at success throughout your career.

Remember only you can choose your career path and successfully document it. Do not wait for it to be chosen for you.

Resources and Citations:

1. EHOPAC: <http://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/eho>
2. Division of Commissioned Personnel: <https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/>
3. EHO Benchmarks: <https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/eho/resources.aspx>
4. EHO CV Format on the EHO Professional Advisory Committee site: <https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/eho/resources.aspx>

Chapter 8 – Leadership Attributes

By
CAPT Tina Lankford and LCDR Jessica Otto

Contributions by: CDR Aimee Treffeletti and LCDR Eva McLanahan

First and foremost, leadership is a critical necessity in any organization. Without leadership a team will be unable to efficiently and effectively tackle problems, address issues, prevent friction, anticipate change, and plan for the future. Leaders demand accountability and lead by example. ¹²Leadership is one of the four Core Values of the Commissioned Corps. Good leaders do not have to be experts, but they do have to possess the skills and gumption to address reality head-on. Leadership requires three things: a leader, a follower, and a common goal. Likewise, becoming a leader is a lifelong skill improved with education and experiences. (1)

Commissioned Corps Officers from Ensign to Admiral have a responsibility to lead. Leadership and the characteristics and abilities it embodies are independent of position and rank. Whether you supervise or not, leadership skills are necessary for the stability and credibility of the Corps and are expected from all who choose to serve. In this chapter we will explore why EHOs are such great leaders, what unique traits they have, leadership opportunities available to junior Officers, and how to get involved.

During your career it is important to develop leadership skills and learn from both the exceptional examples of leadership and from the shortcomings of management under which you serve. The characteristics you build as a leader will lend to the success of all your relationships as you build character and maturity.

Characteristics of a Leader

To lead is to serve; the measure of your leadership is not about what you achieved but what you gave. The following characteristics represent a synthesis by several leadership experts including best-selling author Mark Sanborn. When we are leading from a service-oriented perspective, individually, we are leading by example and bring credibility to our uniform.

In all, the fundamental characteristic of **self-knowledge** is important. If you aren't familiar with your flaws then it will be difficult to progress. Take advantage of leadership courses early in your career and observing or seeking other Officers as mentors.

Second, **integrity** is the ability to stand up for what is right. This characteristic is most important as it relates to subordinates or other professional and personal relations. Performance of duties and decision-making in a manner where leaders are transparent about their process and accountable for their decisions is critical. This is especially important as there will be times when it will be necessary to maintain integrity even if your actions are contrary to what is popular or the expected action.

¹² Leadership provides vision and purpose in public health through inspiration, dedication, and loyalty.

Third, **competency** is the ability to be proficient in your job and can include a combination of knowledge, skills, and behavior. Mostly reflects the ability to learn as well as adapt to the context in executing the leadership role.

Respect for others and the sensitivity to the rights, beliefs, and needs of others is a very important leadership trait.

Last, **accountability** such as taking responsibility and ownership of identified problems and committed to its resolution without passing blame is very admirable in a leader.

Leadership Operationalized

Consider the characteristics shared above and how they may be used in your daily routine as you lead by example. As a leader, you are being watched by others; and placing the good of others before you as an individual, is prudent. An example of something you can do that instills valuable principles is the simple act of checking in on your subordinates or colleagues occasionally. This is done best by a short walk around the workplace (instead of email) which demonstrates interest and availability. Being sequestered in your office and unavailable does not instill confidence. Regular interactions on a

Attributes, Skills, and Core Competencies Important for a Leader (In order of importance)

- Keeps cool under pressure
- Clearly explains mission, standards, and priorities
- Sees the big picture, providing context and perspective
- Makes tough sound decisions on time
- Adapts quickly to new situations, can handle bad news
- Gives useful feedback
- Sets a high ethical tone
- Is positive, encouraging, and realistically optimistic

Excerpt from Army War College Study

personal level by extending small courtesies (e.g., hello, thank-you) and concern towards co-workers are efforts that demonstrate that people are valued. This creates a positive culture for your colleagues and can improve morale and productivity as they are part of a warm and receptive environment. Now, after common courtesies have been employed we can look at other effective leadership tactics.

As a manager, one of your roles is to create a **compelling vision**. It’s important that your team always knows where they are going, so creating a vision is important. Further, ensure that others understand the importance of their role in the mission and recognize their contribution. Maintain this relationship by being a **good listener** and communicate your thoughts clearly and transparently. (2)

How to Lead

While there is no shortage of information for favorable characteristics of a solid leader, less information seems to be available that describes “how” to lead. As part of conducting daily business, staff needs “space” to perform their duties with as much provision of ownership as possible. Generally, leaders’ micromanage when they doubt the work will be done or be done to their satisfaction. This common trap may be averted by following a common rule (described by Burke) referred to as the 80-20 rule. In short, when a team of others can do a job 80% as well as you can, let it go, unless it is your “main” thing. Using this approach, you will get most of the gain from a quality perspective while at the same time increasing staff knowledge, which over time, will improve. The advantage leaving space

and being able to delegate appropriately is that staff will feel empowered, build knowledge, and have ownership for the project and also allows management to be available for other matters. (3)

Dr. John Kotter, of Harvard Business School, is noted for saying that most corporations today are over-managed and under-led. The table provides a short comparison of the two:

Managers vs. Leaders

| Traits of Managers | Traits of Leaders |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Managers have employees | Leaders win followers |
| Managers react to change | Leaders create change |
| Managers have good ideas | Leaders implement them |
| Managers communicate | Leaders persuade |
| Managers direct groups | Leaders create teams |
| Managers try to be heroes | Leaders make heroes of everyone around them |
| Managers take credit | Leaders take responsibility |
| Managers exercise power over people | Leaders exercise power with people |

Followership

What few fail to realize is the value in leading from behind. You do not have to be in a position of power or seniority to lead and provide guidance. RADM Boris Lushniak’s “When Leadership Goes Askew” presentation discusses how all Officers, including those in leadership positions, are also followers. “Followership” is make or break for a leader’s success, especially as they face important decisions. As RADM Lushniak joked, *a leader must be able to make decisions and this typically happens through a committee consisting of an odd number of people less than three*. For that leader, good information is important to make the right decision. Leaders should be told what they need to know not just what they want to hear. Additionally, leaders should be informed of what you do know and what you don’t know. His advice to leadership and followers alike was to take courage in their role of being honest and forthright. (4)

EHOs as Natural Leaders

EHOs are known for tenacity, ability to think out of the box, and a systems approach that is invaluable for solving complex problems. From leading deployment team to mentoring, there is a long tradition of leadership within the Environmental Health Category. Within every facet of public health you can count on EHOs to fill critical leadership roles and excel in getting the best out of their teams. What you may not know is that leadership is not reserved only for senior Officers. Increasing numbers of junior EHOs are filling critical leadership roles and helping to shape the Corps for the future. There is a long rich history of not only senior Corps leadership, but junior EHOs leading from behind as well. EHOs are also often called upon in times of crisis to gather the appropriate teams and formulate the strategies needed for successful mission completion. So what is it that makes EHOs effective leaders?

When a group of junior Officers were asked what skills make EHOs such effective leaders, the following themes arose:

- EHOs often work in multi-disciplinary teams and know how to assemble teams with varied backgrounds to address complex problems.
- EHOs understand that not all problems can be solved with technical skill and knowledge alone. Knowing how to break down complex problems into manageable pieces, communicate risk to varied audiences, and motivate others to be effective problem solvers are vital qualities of a leader.
- EHOs are good at looking at the big picture, not just the problem at hand. This holistic view is essential in planning and utilizing staff and partners to maximize accomplishments towards a goal.

EHOs know the value of the team approach. They practice community engagement, are big picture thinkers, and bring a wealth of public health knowledge to the table. This in essence, is why EHOs are so adept at leadership.

“Lessons Learned” Submitted from PHS Officers:

1. Never expect complete consensus – Be able to make a decision.
2. Never consider a situation from one perspective only.
3. Do not work in “emergency-mode” all the time – promote work-life balance.
4. Know your limitations and don’t be afraid to ask for opinions or consensus among subordinates.
5. Publicly and privately praise the good work of your subordinates.

Lessons from JOAG leaders:

Former leaders from within the category were interviewed on their experiences as leaders in the Junior Officer Advisory Group (JOAG). Their answers to five simple questions might surprise you, and help encourage you to become a leader yourself - regardless of your rank or position.

The interviews were initiated with a simple question:

What made you want to be involved in JOAG in a leadership role?

Each participant spoke to the encouragement of peers to try on a leadership role, the desire to give back and mentor Officers, the desire to make actionable change to difficult issues, and the opportunity to develop leadership skills in a setting other than a formal work team. Many accounts spoke to the profound impact that a peer-mentor can have on an Officer early on in their career. Each Officer made the active choice to pursue voting membership and executive committee leadership roles within JOAG to inform change and hone their leadership skills.

Next, we asked the question: *Why leadership as a junior Officer is so important?* The main theme of these responses is best summarized by **LCDR McLanahan**, former JOAG Executive Secretary:

“Good leadership takes practice. As Officers, we are all leaders and we need to exhibit those characteristics. Junior Officers have a unique position that allows them to explore different avenues and opportunities to develop their leadership skills (via JOAG, PACs, COA, and other groups). It is critical as a young professional and junior Officer to seize the opportunities and learn from them. Once you are a senior Officer, you are expected to have certain leadership abilities and you are looked up to by junior Officers and civil servants – thus while you are a

junior Officer it is important to practice leadership skills and advance your ability to lead in a variety of situations.”

Essentially all the responses echoed this sentiment, and spoke to the fact that if you take on leadership opportunities early, even if they are out of your comfort zone, you will learn and grow in an environment that is a bit more forgiving than when you delve into the world of leadership as a senior Officer.

All EHOs, regardless of their rank or experience should practice the skills and gifts they have been given for the greater good. Encourage fellow Officers to take leadership roles. Talk to peers and senior Officers to find out where their successes have come from and work to emulate those successes. Make a plan and include stretch assignments like voting membership in the PAC or JOAG. No matter what leadership role you take, formal or informal, you will be contributing your talents to further the Corps and protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of the Nation.

Preserving the leader in you

We are at our best when we serve our team from our gifts, our passions, and our experiences. Never stop thinking about what objective you are serving and assess that regularly.

To stay grounded and inspired set aside the following time blocks for yourself:

- 1) Rest time for your body, soul and mind to improve clarity and creative ability;
- 2) Response time to deal with the needs of others; and
- 3) Refocus time to review objectives and priorities.

Leaders must be able to self-lead and take full responsibility to make something happen in spite of limitations. (3)

Continue sharpening your leadership skills by observing those who are successful around you and find a mentor or role model who conducts their professional or personal life in a manner you aspire. Mentor someone else as one of the best ways to distill what you know is to share it with others. To avoid cluttering your mind and daily work life, be more intentional and eliminate activities that don't add value.

Moving Forward

As guided by our PHS Protocol, leadership is the ability to influence others by strength of character and personal vision to achieve common goals. Officers are asked to move forward with fortitude as they serve the public health

Leadership author, Ken Blanchard, provides a memorable acronym defining “SERVE” as follows:

*“S”-See the future,
“E”-Engage and develop others,
“R”-Reinvent continuously,
“V”-Value results and relationships,
“E”-Embody the values.*

mission and have respect for others. PHS Officers are leaders by carrying out their duties with integrity, by keeping their focus on service before self and by taking initiative to make the world a better place. (5)

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4. Lushniak, RADM B. *When Leadership Goes Askew*. Presentation, Integrated Training Summit. 2012.
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Chapter 9 – The EHO Mentoring Program

By
CAPT Richard Turner

"The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves." Steven Spielberg

Introduction: The value of mentoring, in virtually every aspect of life, cannot be overstated. A mentor, whether through a formal or informal process, can help an individual set an early course for success and avoid the pitfalls and obstacles that might derail one's personal and professional progress. The EHOPAC has an active Mentoring and Orientation Program that all EHOs are encouraged to participate in. To access the EHOPAC mentoring program, go to: <https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/eho/resources.aspx#mentoring>

The current mentoring program evolved from one of our Category's former Chief Professional Officer (CPO), CAPT Tom Crow (Ret.), who challenged the PAC to come up with a Mentoring program. The Thomas E. Crow Mentor Award is one of the EHOPAC awards and bears his name for his outstanding foundational work in mentoring that continues to pay big dividends for our category.

Goal of the EHO Mentoring Program: The ¹³goal of the EHO Mentoring program is to foster long-term career development and professional growth. Mentoring is not a *one and done* kind of thing. Just like learning and competency development, it is a life-long and career-long process. You should never stop growing personally and professionally; mentoring and allowing yourself to be mentored is a healthy sign of professional maturity.

Mentoring Background: Mentoring has a historical background that dates to the writings of Homer in the ¹⁴*Odyssey*. The king of Ithaca, Odysseus, entrusted the care of his son and household to *Mentor* (see ¹⁵Figure 9-1), while he was away and fighting in the Trojan War. After the war, Odysseus is destined to wander in vain for ten years while trying to return home. His son, Telemachus, sets out on a quest to find his father. Athena, the Goddess of War, assumes the form of *Mentor* and accompanies Telemachus on his journey. In the end, father and son are reunited and open a can of *you know what* on those who would take the throne from Odysseus and steal his son's birthright. Everyone lives happily ever after (I think). The *Odyssey* is an epic 12,109 line poem comprised of 24 chapters (enjoy at your leisure or watch the movie ¹⁶*O Brother, Where Art Thou*).

The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him his own.

~ Benjamin Disraeli



Figure 9-1: Telemachus and Mentor

According to Gordon Shea in his book entitled *Mentoring*:

"The word Mentor evolved to mean trusted advisor, friend, teacher, and wise person. Mentoring is a fundamental form of human development where one person invests time, energy and personal

¹³ http://www.ehopac.org/Mentoring/Mentoring_Brochure.pdf

¹⁴ Scholars believe it was written near the end of the 8th Century BC. That is a long time ago...

¹⁵ Pablo E. Fabisch – http://pacsmem.stanford.edu/html/proceedings_4.html

¹⁶ *O Brother, Where Art Thou* (2000) is a modern day interpretation of the *Odyssey*

know-how in assisting the growth and ability of another person. History and legend record the deeds of princes and kings, but each of us has a birthright to actualize our potential. Through their deeds and work, mentors help us to move toward that actualization”.

Actualized Potential: The key concept is *actualizing potential*. This is underscored with both the quote from Spielberg above and ¹⁷Disraeli’s quote in the text box; it is critical that a mentor guide, teach, and help a protégé reach their full potential *in their own skin*. A mentor should not try to clone themselves but rather assist their protégé in achieving success as themselves with their own strengths and challenges.

Traits of a Great Mentor: It is helpful to look at those qualities and traits that are associated with a good (even great) mentor. A simple google search will yield hundreds of results, but the following list in the table below from Leadership Resources (<http://lrsuccess.com/qualities-good-mentor/>) provides a summary of the most commonly cited qualities:

| Qualities | Trait |
|----------------------|--|
| Available | Be available by phone, email, in person, to help build the relationship and answer beginning questions they might have. |
| Patient | People learn at different speeds, and some need more guidance than others. |
| Sensitive | Tact and diplomacy are vital. Many people are afraid to face their fears and/or work on weaknesses. |
| Respectful | Each person is unique – respect your protégé’s wishes and don’t push too hard. |
| Flexible | Life happens; always remember that not everything goes according to plan and you may have to allow for last minute changes or shifts in goals. |
| Supportive | Demonstrate pride for what your protégé has accomplished. Be an advocate for their development. |
| Knowledgeable | Know what you can offer a protégé – what is your area of expertise? What knowledge/experience will benefit your protégé? |
| Confident | A mentor should come across as self-assured, friendly, and eager to help. |
| Good Listener | By being a good listener, you enable the protégé to articulate any problem and sort things out. |
| Concerned | A good mentor must genuinely care about people and want to help them become their best. |

Matching Mentors and Protégés: Mentors bear great responsibility and the list in the table above highlights the diverse skill sets that an individual must master to truly be an effective mentor. Additionally, protégés must have a willingness to learn, listen, communicate, and most importantly process the direction and advice they are given to make improvements in their development plan and career path. Mentors must also be receptive and agile enough to know what their protégé needs. The direction of the mentoring program should be capable of being flexed to accommodate the dynamic nature of the needs of the protégé. Some individuals like to go down a list of items, one-by-one, until they are done, while others like the more tangential approach that occurs when active discussion and

¹⁷ British statesman, essayist, writer, and two-time Prime Minister (21 December 1804 – 19 April 1881)

feedback drives the direction. The bottom line? The mentor-protégé combination must work while recognizing and accommodating the individual needs of the protégé.

The Mentoring program sponsored by the EHOPAC attempts to match mentors and protégés based on a number of factors such as agency or OPDIV and geographical location. However, for ultimate success, a mentor and protégé must “click” personality wise (not that their personalities be necessarily the same, but for the relationship to be productive, they must fit well together). As a protégé, you have the right to have the “right” mentor and can request to be reassigned. Additionally, you can request a specific individual to serve as your mentor. Remember, the goal of the mentoring program centers around the protégé’s needs, not those of the mentor.

Informal versus formal mentoring: Participating in a formal mentoring environment lends itself to structure and organization. Typically, a formal mentoring program has a start and end date associated with it. The EHOPAC mentoring program is designed to last a year; however, individuals are encouraged to continue participating in mentoring activities in an informal manner. Many senior Officers participate in the formal mentoring process but do much more mentoring in an informal manner.

Conclusion: Speaking from experience, I have had the good fortune to have participated in the formal mentoring process and have found it to be rewarding and useful. I have also found that informal mentoring is an excellent opportunity to share experiences and offer guidance and direction over an extended period of time. Many of my informal protégés are former COSTEPs of mine. I am fortunate to remain in contact with a good number of my former students; their successes and struggles, victories and challenges, provide a constant source of encouragement and life lessons that go both ways. I remain challenged and professionally invigorated by the successes of my protégés, who themselves, now serve as mentors to others.

I encourage senior Officers to proactively seek out the opportunity to mentor junior Officers. Certainly, it is critical that potential mentors be willing to share their knowledge and experiences with those that are actively seeking such information. I would also remind the protégés of today that they are the mentors of tomorrow. We don’t get to where we are by flying solo all the time. A gracious, humble, knowledgeable, and sincere mentor can make a major difference in the career and life of a junior Officer. Remember to pass it on when the opportunity affords itself.

*The protégés of today
are the mentors of
tomorrow...*

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Chapter 10 – Fostering Esprit de Corps

By
LT Kazuhiro Okumura

Contributions by CDR Jill Shugart, CDR Carrie Oyster, and CDR Aimee Treffiletti

Esprit de Corps: ¹⁸*A common spirit of comradeship, enthusiasm, and devotion to a cause among the members of a group.*

It is highly encouraged that EHOs get involved with Category Day and advisory groups recognized by the OSG. Some of these groups include JOAG, Minority Officers Liaison Council, Hispanic Officer Advisory Committee, Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group, American Indian Alaskan Native Commissioned Officer Advisory Committee, and Asian Pacific American Officers Committee. You can find more information about these groups at <https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/>.

There are many other ways to give back to the environmental health profession. The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) has plenty of committees that are seeking volunteers. This is a great way to meet Environmental Health practitioners from across the country and overseas. Attendance at the Annual Education Conference & Exhibition is something you should consider during your career. For more information see <http://www.neha.org>.

The Uniformed Services Environmental Health Association (USEHA) is a great organization to volunteer your time. Many PHS EHOs volunteer with USEHA including several Officers who have served as president. For more information visit <http://www.useha.org>.

The National Environmental Health Association also has affiliations with state environmental health associations across the country. Being active in your state association gives you the chance to develop relationships with people who can become your assets and is a great medium to present what you do for PHS. The face to face interactions with these individuals make it great for recruitment and marketing!

Now we can't talk about networking if we don't include something about social media. The EHO category is very active on Facebook and LinkedIn. On Facebook, a group is set up exclusively for Officers on active duty and an EHOPAC page for conducting outreach and recruitment. The group is routinely updated with duty station vacancies, photos from deployments and other events, and volunteer opportunities. The EHOPAC LinkedIn page has many of the same postings as well as contributions from other environmental health practitioners. You can find information on these pages by searching for them on the respective forums or by visiting <https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/eho/>

For those of you in isolated duty stations, one event that can provide the opportunity to interact with other Commissioned Corps Officers is the PHS Annual Scientific and Training Symposium and the EHO Category Day. It is the only event that is planned by Commissioned Corps Officers for Commissioned Corps Officers. Here is CDR Jill Shugart with her thoughts about the Symposium and attending Category Day:

Category Day is not required. In fact, most people plan their summer vacations without giving the only annual gathering of all Commissioned Corps Officers a second thought.

¹⁸ American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition. Copyright© 2011

This is surprising to me considering the first mentor I had while in the process of joining the Corps gave me two pieces of advice: (1) attend the USPHS Symposium, especially your Category Day every year, and (2) marry someone who is mobile, for example a teacher (which I actually did). This female Commander in the HSO category at the time explained that attending the Symposium and Category Day was the best way to really feel connected. To remember what it means to be a part of something. To find out what is going on with the Corps and to not forget why you signed up in the first place and to recommit to what is expected of us.

Attending Category Day for me is to reconnect with others and to see the opportunity in your circumstances. It is to get ideas on how to do better and to learn creative strategies to cross-cultural boundaries. It is to meet mentors and friends who can help you through your challenges and let you know when you are ready for new ones. It is simply learning what it means to be an EHO and how you fit into the Corps. For some attending Category Day, it may mean finding your dream job. For some it may be learning about educational opportunities and new credentials to pursue. For some it may just mean understanding the category benchmarks and the learning about the EHOPAC or hearing about what it is like to deploy to a natural disaster or work in a foreign country. For me, it is ultimately about recommitting to the mission and how I can best protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of our nation.

Volunteer: Because EHO Category Day is planned by your peers, this is a great event to get involved in as a planner and/or a presenter. Being a planner is a great way to develop and demonstrate your leadership skills and build networks and relationships. During the planning process, not only is your interaction with those that are in your own category, but you have a chance to work with Officers across the Commissioned Corps. If you would like to volunteer as a planner, we highly suggest you attend a Category Day and speak to the planners. Being a presenter has many benefits, one of them being the obvious of honing your oral presentation skills. Another benefit is being able to share with fellow Officers what you do at your duty station, and your passions that make you a great Officer. Plus, it will get your name and face to those in the category.

So what's so great about EHO Category Day? This is an opportunity to make new friends, reconnect with old ones, meet a new mentor, learn about what other Officers do in their duty stations, etc. But what Officers gain the most is a sense of *esprit de corps*. There will be times when you may become frustrated in the field, especially if you are only one of a few PHS Officers at a duty station. Coming to Category Day, seeing the impact our work has in the field of public health and then learning about other categories and PHS throughout the symposium really reminds you why you joined and the real service PHS is providing.

Chapter 11 – The JRCOSTEP Program

By
CDR Jill Shugart and CDR Jacob Wamsley

So, what is a JRCOSTEP? A junior commissioned officer student training and externship program (Don't ask how they came up with that name!) is an internship program for certain categories in the PHS. JRCOSTEP opportunities are frequently limited to certain professions and categories. Currently, only three professional PHS categories are accepting applications for JRCOSTEPs and those are the EHO category, the Engineering category, and the Pharmacy category. Students who are enrolled in an accredited degree program that meets the requirements of the professional categories listed above can apply for an internship typically lasting ¹⁹30–90 days at a PHS duty station across the United States. The application process is extensive and application materials must be marked by December 31 of each year.

To find out more about the JRCOSTEP application process visit

<http://www.usphs.gov/student/jrcostep.aspx>.

Once students are selected by a sponsoring agency, which means they (the agency) are agreeing to hire an individual, the student then goes through a medical and security screening process, and they must get confirmed by the DHHS Secretary before receiving personnel orders for their new assignment.

The students are paid according to the military pay chart at the 0-1 or Ensign level and are provided a Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) equivalent to the location where they moved from to take their PHS assignment (unlike full time active duty Officers who receive BAH based on their duty assignment's zip code). Wearing the uniform is optional for JRCOSTEPs and it is up to the preceptor and/or the sponsoring agency whether they have to wear one or not. Just remember that military protocol is the same as for all services. All Officers, including JRCOSTEPs, are held to a standard of conduct that is representative of a United States Officer and are expected to be a professional in uniform and out of uniform. Your supervisor will let you know the proper uniform attire if it is required.

Did you know?

The DHHS operating divisions sponsored 189 EHO JRCOSTEPs between 2006 and 2012.

Fifteen percent of Environmental Health Officers called to active duty between 2004 and 2010 completed a JRCOSTEP.

Half of EHOs called to active duty in 2012 have completed JRCOSTEPs.

Agencies that have sponsored a JRCOSTEP in the past include IHS, USCG, ATSDR, CDC, NIH, and the Office of the Secretary.

¹⁹ **Note:** New rules allow JRCOSTEP tours to extend up to 180 days.

The JRCOSTEP program is an opportunity or a *foot in the door* with these agencies. The ultimate goal of the JRCOSTEP should be to assist the agency with completing a special project or requested tasks and at the same time to learn new skills, meet any university requirements, and have a GREAT introduction to the PHS. It should also be noted that the current calls to active duty (CAD) are limited to applicants who had a previous COSTEP experience, so it is a vital experience for future career opportunities.

A look at JRCOSTEP in the agencies:

IHS: An EHO JRCOSTEP in IHS could be assigned to a field location within the Division of Environmental Health Services (<http://www.ihs.gov/dehs/>). The IHS is composed of 12 areas, and within each area are districts and service units. You could be assigned to any one of those locations. Duties are wide ranging and cover most of the traditional environmental health activities. You may be involved with food safety inspections at local restaurants, markets, or tribal gatherings; conducting water/sewer system surveys; participating in rabies vaccinations clinics; conducting investigations of nuisance complaints or disease outbreaks; assisting with institutional surveys at local hospitals, jails, or schools; or even participating in deployment training exercises with state and local officials. You can read about past EHO JRCOSTEP experiences with the IHS at http://www.ihs.gov/dehs/index.cfm?module=dsp_dehs_costeps#2013.

USCG: As a JRCOSTEP with the USCG, the student would be assigned to one of two Command Sections in Norfolk, VA or Alameda, CA in the Environmental Health and Safety Branch. This branch is responsible for the environmental health of all of the USCG across the nation and the entire world. The section conducts exposure monitoring data on things like sound levels at firing ranges and even sound levels that fish are exposed to when a new siren or engine is proposed for installation on a watercraft. One may also find oneself evaluating potential lead contamination at a USCG firing range or conducting ergonomic studies such as the position and seating for crew members on a C-130 airplane on ice patrol in the northern U.S. waters. All of these projects are hands on and require on site evaluation and measurement.

ATSDR: As a JRCOSTEP at ATSDR, the student would be assigned to a division or specific branch. Specific activities may include developing interactive environmental health learning tools and differentiating different methods of communication for multiple group settings, participating in town hall meetings, and identifying community concerns for a particular chemical or hazard in the environment.

CDC: As a JRCOSTEP at CDC, the student could be assigned to a multitude of divisions, branches, or specific programs. Activities may include assisting federal partners with understanding the environmental health role at the state and local level and how all these entities work together, working with epidemiologists to identify key environmental health components that may have broken down during an outbreak, conducting safety surveys on multiple campuses, and participating in preparedness and response exercises.

NIH: As a JRCOSTEP at NIH, a student might perform microbiological procedures on environmental submissions to test for antimicrobial susceptibility, assist with animal necropsies, or conduct biomedical research as it relates to industrial hygiene and safety. These students would most likely be assigned to an NIH campus in the Maryland/DC area.

Benefits of the JRCOSTEP Experience: The benefits of completing a JRCOSTEP are numerous. Mentors, supervisors, and members of the EHOPAC have received positive feedback on this program over the last several years. It is one of the best ways for students to get field experience and also learn about the Commissioned Corps and the EHO category. Joining the Corps can be a very big transition for some individuals, but learning about it and living it before deciding to become general active duty can make a world of difference, especially for those seeking positions in remote locations. Not only do students get to learn more about the Corps and their profession, they will get paid for their time, which is usually as competitive if not more so than most other internships available in the field of environmental health. The JRCOSTEP also allows the student to network with other EHOs and allows hiring officials within the Corps to see if the student will be a good fit for the Corps in general or even their office or agency.

Peer Accounts of their JRCOSTEP Experience: JRCOSTEPs are one of the best marketing tools our category has, so help us be part of that process! You never know what benefits you might gain and who you might meet along the way. It is guaranteed to be an adventure you will never forget!

This is from **LT Sarah Safari** who completed her COSTEP at USCG, Norfolk VA.

“Building relationships with the highly intelligent and dedicated team was one of the many aspects that I appreciated about my JRCOSTEP experience. I had the opportunity to work with individuals that are experts in the field and I was able to experience professional growth. The entire experience was rewarding and gave me the opportunity to learn leadership skills and increased knowledge of my field of study. I started with aspiration of finding a stimulating and challenging internship that could possibly lead to a rewarding career and I received that with the JRCOSTEP.”

CDR Carrie Oyster, relating her experience with IHS at the Office of Environmental Health and Engineering Nashville Area, Northern District Office, Manlius, NY:

“I served two JRCOSTEP tours (120 and 90 days). Like most of us who served as Ensigns with the USPHS, we probably heard about COSTEP assignments from our school advisors, who told us glorifying tales of how we could run around trapping rodents, testing for new/emerging diseases, cleaning the environment, seeing the world, saving people, and protecting public health. Plus, along the way we would get paid to “live the dream.” And, I must say, what I was told that fall day in Athens, OH was 100% correct. Never did I image all the places I’d travel and all the opportunities that would present themselves to me, simply by signing up for a summer “internship.” If you’ll forgive the pun, because of my COSTEPs the world did become my oyster. My COSTEPs with the Indian Health Service taught me about facility inspections, indoor air quality, community health, disease transmission, potable water, vector control, and so much more. More important than all the real-life-not-book training, I found out the best jobs in the world can be found within the USPHS Environmental Health Officer category. I am forever grateful and will always look back fondly to those rat trapping, lead paint testing, Head Start school design blueprint reading, proper handwashing technique teaching, pow wow food establishment inspection performing, IAQ training days as ENS Oyster. What an amazing

“internship” that steered my life forever on the course of serving as a Public Health Responder and USPHS Commissioned Corps Officer.”

Another benefit of the JRCOSTEP is that of the mentor or supervisor of the student. The Commissioned Corps Officer who chooses to take on the role of JRCOSTEP preceptor is in for a real treat! The JRCOSTEP preceptor will get supervisory experience while developing work plans and special projects for the student and managing the day to day activities of the student. The preceptor will also get the reward of mentoring and giving advice to junior Officers trying to figure out their way ahead. Don't forget about the enthusiasm students will most likely bring to your office and all of the knowledge they have learned, including new technology that may not have existed when the preceptor went to school.

CDR Lisa Delaney with NIOSH, Atlanta, provided the following thoughts about supervising a COSTEP:

“Hiring a JRCOSTEP is a win-win for you and the agency. Not only do you get the opportunity to mentor bright, young professionals and introduce them to the Public Health Service, but you also get an extra set of hands in the office to help with important work. During the selection process, you have the opportunity to find students that have the right skillsets to match the assignment. I was able to identify a Master's level student studying occupational safety and health who also had experience as a volunteer firefighter and a hospital technician. His unique skillsets were a great match to the work that we do in my emergency preparedness and response office at NIOSH. ENS Doug Erling was a great addition to the team. He completed a comprehensive literature review on the health and safety issues impacting wildland firefighters and contributed to the development of numerous emergency response plans.”

Resources and Citations:

Many resources are available to learn more about JRCOSTEP internships. A few are listed below:

1. Learn more about the JRCOSTEP application process at <http://www.usphs.gov/student/jrcostep.aspx>
2. Read the student narratives of former JRCOSTEPs who have served across the country <https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/eho/resources.aspx>
3. Understand the benefits of hiring a JRCOSTEP by reading <http://ehopac.org/BenefitsofHiringaJRCOSTEP.pdf>
4. Check out this website with important information potential JRCOSTEPs should know at http://ehopac.org/resources/student/FinalEHOJRCOSTEPTips_112012.pdf
5. JRCOSTEP Preceptors can learn more about what to expect and how to prepare at http://ehopac.org/Mentoring/COSTEP_Mentoring_Guide_May%202012%20final.pdf
6. Current JRCOSTEPs can learn more about the benefits of PHS at
 - o <http://www.usphs.gov> (benefits information and records, etc.)
 - o <https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/eho/> (main resource guidance for EHOs)
 - o <http://www.usphs.gov> (general information about the Corps and application processes)

- <https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/eho/readinessresources.aspx> (deployment information and readiness)
- <http://www.coausphs.org/> (the Commissioned Officers Association [COA])

The Junior Officers Advisory Group: is a function and a voice for Officers O1 through O4. The JOAG is a great group for young Officers, who have the same challenges and questions, to get together online and at conferences. To learn more about JOAG, visit their website at <https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/JOAG/> .

Still have questions on the JRCOSTEP? Contact the Chair of the EHOPAC Marketing and Recruitment Subcommittee so they can put you in touch with the JRCOSTEP workgroup. Contact information can be found at <https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/eho/subcommittees.aspx#marketingAndRecruitment>

Chapter 12 – Personal Occupational Health and Safety – CliffsNotes™

By
LT Chris Fish and CAPT Tina Lankford

The following information provides the EHO with some fundamental tips and thoughts (hence, the CliffsNotes™ reference...) about acquiring and maintaining personal occupational health and safety habits that should become second nature. These should be applied on and off the job. The benefits of knowledge and application of this information will be two-fold: (1) the EHO will be personally safer on the job, and (2) much of the knowledge you learn and practice can be used as part of your technical job duties.

General Safety

As an EHO you will likely be involved either directly or tangentially to safety issues and at times be the closest “expert” around. Because safety is such a big part of environmental health, it is important to stay abreast of the popular safety issues and where to reference the most up to date resources. We are sharing here a few quick “grab-and-go” reference points or concepts so you can be aware, practice, and then dig further if needed to fit the situation at hand. Most of the information below is centered on typical workplaces and what our fellow EHOs have been responsible for. This is not an exhaustive list but just a start. Safety is often overlooked as people get accustomed and familiar with their environment. Stay mindful and keep your safety vision on for the following hazards:

1. Be prepared to respond in the case of an emergency in your workplace. If your office has an existing emergency action plan you should become familiar with it, and know what emergencies are possible. To learn more about the requirements of emergency action plans, review the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standard 29 CFR 1910, Subpart E – Exit Routes, Emergency Action Plans, and Fire Prevention.
2. Understand the basics of electrical safety, and how to identify some of the common electrical hazards such as exposed conductors and overloaded circuits. OSHA’s Working Safely with Electricity fact sheet provides a quick primer on the topic.
https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_Hurricane_Facts/elect_safety.pdf
3. Musculoskeletal disorders can be painful and keep you from doing fun stuff. Protect your back through regular exercise and good lifting practices. Visit the NIOSH Ergonomics and Musculoskeletal Disorders webpage for information on prevention of injuries.
4. Slips, trips and falls are among the most common sources of injuries in the workplace. You should always practice three points of contact (two hands and a foot OR two feet and a hand) when walking on stairways, climbing ladders, or negotiating difficult terrain. Slippery and uneven surfaces lead to many falls in the workplace, and you should tackle these issues by fixing or marking them for anyone who may encounter them.
5. Housekeeping is a practice that presents a professional image, saves time, and provides for a safer and enjoyable working space. As an Officer you should practice good housekeeping at all times and lead by example.

6. Parking lots and commuting are a source of many incidents. Be prepared for other drivers, and take a defensive driving course.

Industrial Safety

Industrial environments tend to be less familiar to many EHOs, and it can take a bit of time to understand the dangers present. You should be aware of threats and dangers to your personal safety as you approach any job or work site. Many safety trainings are available such as OSHA 10-hour/30-hour courses that can give you much of the general safety information you will need. However, nothing replaces site-specific training and experience. The first question to ask when you arrive at a scene is “Is the scene safe? Do I have the knowledge and personal protective equipment (PPE) required to be safe?”

1. Personal protective equipment is the last line of defense available to provide protection for many situations and is hazard specific. Make sure the PPE you have will provide adequate protection for the workplace hazards. More information is available on the OSHA website at <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/personalprotectiveequipment/index.html>.
2. Hearing Protection – Needing to raise your voice to be heard in an industrial environment is a good sign that you should measure the decibel level. A general guideline is if you cannot hear someone at arms’ length then it is over 85 decibels, which requires hearing protection. OSHA’s Hearing Conservation publication is a good resource on the topic at <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/osha3074.pdf>.
3. Lock-out tag-out (LOTO) is the process required to de-energize equipment so that it will not energize while you are exposed to the hazard. If you are in a situation requiring LOTO, ensure you have been trained and understand the hazards of the work. OSHA has a good LOTO eTool and a factsheet that provides an overview of the topic at https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_General_Facts/factsheet-lockout-tagout.pdf.
4. Fall protection is a program to ensure that employees are not exposed to unguarded fall hazards without appropriate controls, planning, training, or PPE. Any time a work surface is greater than 4 feet high, fall protection must be considered. Ladder safety is a major component of fall protection, and understanding how to properly use step ladders and extension ladders would be basic, but valuable knowledge for any EHO. NIOSH has created an excellent ladder safety app for smartphones. More information is available on the OSHA website at <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/fallprotection/>
5. Confined space is defined as any space that is large enough for a worker to enter and perform a job, but has limited or restricted means for entry or exit, and is not designed for continuous occupancy. Examples of confined spaces include manholes, tanks, silos, tunnels, vaults storage bins, and ductwork. Permit-required confined spaces are those that might contain an additional hazard such as potential for entrapment, equipment hazards, or hazardous atmospheres. Confined spaces present a high level of danger; prior to entering you should receive extensive training and be properly equipped. At a minimum, you should review the OSHA Permit-Required Confined Spaces website at <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/osha3138.html>.
6. Excavation and trenching will occur on many industrial sites, and it is important to understand that any excavation or trench over 5 feet deep has a potential of caving in and burying workers.

Do not enter an excavation or trench unless you have been trained and understand the hazards. More information is available on the OSHA website at <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/trenchingexcavation/index.html>.

7. Heavy equipment – Are there powered industrial trucks, cranes, and vehicles on the site? If so, there are many hazards. Have at least a basic understanding of high risks such as the blind spots of all vehicles and equipment, and never work under a suspended load. More information is available on the OSHA website at <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/hurricane/heavy-equip.html>.

Personal Safety

As an Officer in uniform, you will always need to be aware of your surroundings. We are frequently mistaken as military and depending on national climate and current events (which you should also keep up with), you may need to be extra vigilant at times. Additionally, acting wisely and making sound decisions may require you to reconsider wearing your uniform when traveling alone, off-hours, and outside your duty station. Some practices and precautions for you to consider:

1. **Take a self-defense course.** Several organizations offer them within the community (some may be free). Do a quick Google search to see what is in your area. This would be money and time well-spent. This type of course will teach you how to defend yourself, be aware of unsafe conditions, make weapons out of every-day items, and provide strategies to get you out of a pinch when physically threatened.
2. **Stay in shape!** Maybe you can't outrun a leopard (or can you? See ²⁰link below...☺) but you could possibly outrun some thug who may be not prepared or ready to set off on a chase. Always avoid confrontation or run if you can get away and someone has a weapon or demonstrate a threat. You can avoid a lot of risks if you are moving away from the danger.
3. **Maintain situational awareness!** Use it all of the time—not just on deployment. For instance, **HAVE YOUR KEYS IN YOUR HAND WHEN WALKING TOWARDS YOUR HOUSE OR CAR!** It doesn't hurt to look around a minute and size up what's going on before you enter any area. "Watch your six" as they say, to always know what's happening in your blind spot (behind you). Learn how to use keys and other everyday things as a defensive weapon!
4. **Learn basic tactics to avoid danger.** If you find yourself in an unstable environment, be careful to not further provoke or draw attention to yourself when around or approached by someone who is a potential threat (e.g., "whacked out" on street drugs such as meth or bath salts). Escalating the situation will only put you in further harm's way. See the following site to learn how to avoid dangerous situations:

<http://www.functionselfdefense.org/awareness-prevention>

Also consider learning "de-escalation" techniques. Here are a few additional sites with tips:

<http://www.securitysolutionsmagazine.biz/2014/08/20/verbal-de-escalation-techniques-that-actually-work/> and

²⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EK73UswA75o>

http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/sssta/20110707_DeescalationTechniques.pdf.

5. **Be prepared for emergencies!** Whether you are stranded in your car or in your house you need to have a means to communicate, stay warm (or cool), and have water and subsistence.

For the car, make sure to always have the following: (1) blanket or jacket, (2) emergency light – have extra batteries as well, (3) always leave with a full water bottle when you drive (good for health and safety) (4) phone charger, (5) fix-a-flat or any other fluid if you drive a leaky car, and (6) first aid kit.

For the house have: (1) candles, (2) lighters/matches, (3) flashlights (pre-staged and plugged into outlet), (4) extra batteries, (5) back-up battery for cell phone, and (6) ready-to-eat pantry items.

For more personal safety information, visit the U.S. Department of State webpage at <http://www.state.gov/m/ds/rls/rpt/19773.htm>.

or the National Crime Prevention Council at

<http://www.ncpc.org/topics/violent-crime-and-personal-safety>.

Stay Safe by being Safe!

References and Citations:

All references and citations are embedded in the relevant locations within the chapter text.

Chapter 12.5 – Taking Care of Yourself

By
CAPT Tina Lankford

As a PHS Officer, the most important thing you can do is to maintain your readiness, resilience, and well-being. This starts with maintaining a self-awareness of your mind, body, and spirit as member of the PHS and as a responder. Typically, as we work hard to enhance public health processes and infrastructure and improve the health and experiences of the lives we touch, we often leave little time for ourselves. Your life is important, and taking care of your own needs will remind you of the things you value and also provide a good example for others to follow. Relaxing will prevent burnout, strengthen the immune system, and potentially prevent chronic diseases from negatively affecting your health.

This chapter is meant to help you protect and manage your health. Just like the in-flight instruction of "put your air mask on first," it is necessary to take care of yourself in order to sustain the interest and energy to be of help to others.

Wellness:

Wellness is an active lifelong process of being aware of choices and making decisions toward a more balanced and fulfilling life. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines wellness as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

The National Wellness Institute defines wellness as “a conscious, self-directed and evolving process of achieving full potential.”

These entities, and experts, describe wellness in terms of domains and dimensions. Check out the References and Citations section of this chapter to explore them further.

Did you know?

The Pan American Health Organization describes seven domains of wellness: emotional, environmental, intellectual, physical, social, spiritual, and financial (or occupational).

Optimal wellness: To stay in an optimal state of wellness, our mind-set needs to be one of continuous improvement, never reaching perfection. In all aspects of our life, if we continue to assess, learn, and grow, we will have fulfillment and purpose. It can be very challenging to consider the many facets of our life all at once, and making drastic, multiple changes all at once isn't suggested. To build this in as part of your daily living, the following plan is provided to help you organize your personal wellness plan. A wellness assessment based on the WHO's Seven Dimensions of Wellness is also provided in Appendix B.

The following is a suggested plan based on weekly, monthly, and annual intervals; however, you may orient your personal care plan in response to your own specific needs.

Weekly: Find a quiet space and reflect how the week went and set goals for the following week and consider the following areas as a minimum:

1. Work Tasks/Performance:

- A checklist in your planner is helpful to provide an indication of what has been completed and what needs to be carried over to the following week. If several items are getting carried over, then there is a clue that you need to block more time on your calendar for working time to get projects completed.
- Look for times or areas where your time is not being used efficiently. Email tends to be a worm hole for time passage. Leave it open only if you are trying to distract yourself from real projects that need to be completed. Most find it helpful to open it every 2 hours versus leaving it open all day, as this can be distracting.
- Organization – If you spend too much time searching for files and digging through old emails, set aside a block on your calendar, maybe a few hours every week, to create or organize your filing system. The additional time you block to complete projects as “working time” on your calendar may also improve organization.

2. Emotional Health:

- Practice self-awareness by reflecting on your responses to situations over the course of the week. Bring to mind responses that were negative, in haste, or not as thorough as you would have liked; these will be circumstances you can improve or revisit during the next week.
- If you find yourself ruminating over items that occurred during the week and have difficulty leaving work at work you are missing out on important recuperation and recovery time. Make a list of things that you really enjoy doing alone or with family and friends that make you happy. Schedule at least one of these activities over the weekend and make sure to commit to it with your undivided attention.
- How was your balance of work and life this week? While there are weeks that are unavoidably more work than play, make sure these do not creep into habit! Set alarms for yourself to leave work and when necessary to work at home, and draw a distinctive line between working time and/or space and leisure time (which is not being plugged in to email or work phone). Over time, this may stress your relationships with family at home as they feel unimportant or not supported. No one ever lay on their deathbed wishing they had spent more time at work!

3. Relational/Social Health:

- Do you have friends or a social group that you are a part of? Any type of group works to help you stay grounded and have opportunities to interact with others outside of home and work. These groups may be a part of your hobby or talent (fitness, photography, music, knitting), strictly social (book clubs, old friend meet-ups), religious or philanthropic meetings, and events in which you are regularly participating.

4. Physical Health:

- ²¹Exercise is the foundational component to keeping your body (and brain) healthy. Blood, lymph, and oxygen circulation all support major systems to protect your immunity (lungs and digestion), brain health, and muscle and joint health for functionality.
- Mix it up! You don't have to be a marathoner to get in great shape. Several new studies are showing how combining moderate to intensive bouts of cardio with strength training is very beneficial to health. It is also important to cross-train to limit wear and tear on the same muscles and joints. I also provides an opportunity to mix all muscles to get worked.
- Mental health and stress levels are also greatly improved by being active regardless of what you do. Think of exercises you can do during travel or at your desk. Common examples include dips using chairs or desks, planks, jump rope, jogging/marching in place, walking lunges, stair climbing, push-ups, squats, high kicks, side bends, arm circles, etc. Several desk exercises are available from a quick internet search.

Did You Know?

The minimum time necessary for health benefits is 150 minutes per week of cardio and two muscle strengthening sessions per week using all major muscle groups.

Monthly:

1. Financial Health:

- Keep a budget. Getting paid once a month can be difficult. If you are finding that you have no money at the end of the month, it is a good idea to begin budgeting to see where you may cut expenses. Easy starts include:
 - Eating out: limit your family to one or two meals per week (maybe weekends) as usually this is a big culprit.
 - Watching credit card spending, and use cash if it helps you spend less. Some Officers transfer a set amount into a spending fund (for eating out, entertainment, miscellaneous), and when it is gone then they wait until the following month.

²¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adults/index.htm>

- Looking for free activities you can do with your family. Communities have parks, festivals, and discounted community classes (including health, crafts, and leisure).

Annually:

1. Preventive Health Screenings:

- Another important part of physical health is to stay current on your preventive health screenings. Use the following reference chart: (in Appendix B below).
- Immunizations – It's easy to let immunizations become overdue. For the most part we are covered as we enter the Corps. But the ones to watch are the annual flu shot, tetanus (every 10 years), MMR, and the PPD (unless you have completed the two negative tests within a 12-month period). For the most up-to-date guidance, refer to the Medical Affairs immunization resource page:

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/Medical%20Affairs/MA_immunizations_m.aspx

2. Life Goals:

- Each year, reassess your life aspirations and goals (see the Vision Board discussion in Chapter 5). What experiences have inspired you this year? Have you acquired a new interest in your work or personal life for which you need to make space? What is your 5-year vision?
- Intellectual health – what skillsets or knowledge have you considered or wish to pursue as part of your long-term career goals or personal wishes? Going back to school to study while working is achievable, with many opportunities now available for online and evening courses. Very few degrees are limited to on-campus study.

3. Emergency Financial Planning:

- For readiness purposes, the ideal is to maintain a 3-month emergency supply of saved money. Families can be strained when their active duty family member not available due to deployment. Be sure you assign someone to oversee your finances and bill paying by setting up joint ownership of checking and savings accounts.
- Some savings accounts and banks will allow you to identify beneficiaries or survivorship. This is a good idea for your family to have immediate access to your funds.
- If you bank online, leave a secured file with online passwords to allow a designated family member to pay bills in case you are in an area with no internet access or time to access.
- Do a will! Although it may seem silly and a little morbid, once it's done, it's done! Some wills only apply to the state in which they were developed, so make sure your will is valid if you transfer.
- If you are a single parent, setting up a short-term and long-term child custodial plan is important. At times you may need to deploy on short notice. For this scenario, identify in advance a family member, someone near your home, or someone who is part of your social

community whom you trust to take care of your child for the short-term. A longer term plan would include how your designated longer-term care provider would connect with the short-term provider.

- A locked, fire-proof safe for important documents is a good idea, as well as designating someone who may access it when needed.

Resilience: Minding the wellness domains mentioned above also works to increase resilience. Resilience does not mean that you are never stressed or things don't bother you – that would not be human. Instead, resilience is the capacity to withstand stress and catastrophe. Psychologists have long recognized the capabilities of humans to adapt and overcome risk and adversity. See <http://www.pbs.org/video/conversations-live-resilience/> for more information. Understanding the signs and signals of stress can prevent undue tension, build resilience, and potentially save your life.

As a Commissioned Corps Officer, our basic readiness requirements are to support our resilience on the job as well as to provide swift and effective response to urgent health needs. (See Appendix D for a Basic Readiness Checklist.) To have a ...healthy force, ready to respond, and protected from disease and injury, Officers must be involved in an ongoing process of health maintenance and improvement. So here, within our own Commissioned Corps manual circular 377, we are given permission to institute an ongoing program to achieve and maintain fitness. Our fitness program needs to include elements that increase body strength, cardio-respiratory fitness, and flexibility to improve daily life activities and functions year-round to safely complete the annual physical fitness test (APFT). Visit the 2014 Manual Circular – Commissioned Corps Personnel – PHS NO. 377 (Basic Level of Force Readiness Standards for the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service) for instructions on completing the APFT at https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/RedDOG/REDDOG_APFT_m.aspx

Maintaining mental health: is important for all during a response. A sign of stress is not a symptom of weakness but a warning sign your body needs attention, like a car's temperature gauge indicating overheating. Ignoring symptoms may lead to further deterioration and increase risks for illness and accidents.

The following chart provides signs and symptoms of stress and examples of activities that may help temporarily suspend or help withstand stress in your situation.

| Type of Distress | Symptoms | Possible Solutions |
|------------------|---|--|
| Physical | Fatigue Nausea Fine tremors Dizziness GI upset Heart palpitations Choking sensation | Diet Exercise Sleep Relaxation Breathing Meditation |

| Type of Distress | Symptoms | Possible Solutions |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Behavioral/Emotional | Anxiety Grief Irritability Feeling overwhelmed Irritability Crying easily Hypervigilance Thoughts of harm to oneself or others | Family/Friends Social time Volunteering Fellowship |
| Cognitive | Memory loss Poor concentration Reduced attention span Difficulty making decisions Confusing trivial with major issues | Training Reading Perspective |

References and Citations: The following resources are provided for more information on resilience and tools for deployment that you may use for helping yourself and others. The Breathe2Relax and Virtual Hope Box smart phone apps are helpful for daily or weekly use.

1. American Psychological Association's Road to Resilience: <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx#>
2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Disaster App: http://www.store.samhsa.gov/apps/disaster/index.html?WT.mc_id=WB_20131219_DISASTERAPP_400x225
3. The National Center for Telehealth & Technology (T2): <http://t2health.dcoe.mil/>
4. Specific smart phone apps for mental health:
 - o Breathe2Relax: <http://t2health.dcoe.mil/apps/breathe2relax>
 - o Virtual Hope Box: <http://t2health.dcoe.mil/apps/virtual-hope-box>
5. Several resources and tools for providers and clients: <http://t2health.dcoe.mil/programs/afterdeployment>

To further explore the seven dimensions of wellness, as defined the Pan American Health Organization, check out the following site:

<http://www1.paho.org/English/AD/dpc/nc/7-dimensions-wellness.pdf>

The International Council on Active Aging© also provides excellent information on wellness:

<http://www.icaa.cc/activeagingandwellness/wellness.htm>

Appendix A – Environmental Health Officer History Milestones

History of the Environmental Health Officer Category

The following excerpt from A Brief History of the Sanitarian Category was provided by the PHS Historian. The information includes PHS milestones that influenced the growth and number of officers in the Category.

1943

- The first sanitarians, Louis J. Ogden and Robert D. Murrill, were called to active duty as Assistant Sanitarians on 1 February 1943. Assignments during and after World War II included:
 - Malaria control activities near military training bases in the southern U.S.
 - United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA) in North Africa and Greece Malaria control activities in Turkey as part of the Marshall Plan
 - Environmental health services (water purification, sewage disposal, food sanitation, insect and rodent control, etc.) for housing projects for the Federal Public Housing Authority (a wartime agency).

1948

- Sanitarian Category established in the Regular Corps. At this time the category accepted individuals with backgrounds in entomology, physics, chemistry, etc. Development of training for State environmental health officials after WW II began during this time.
 - This was accomplished through field training stations of the Communicable Disease Center, or its predecessor.
 - The training provided a 3 month course in field application of all environmental health activities to U.S. and foreign sanitarians.

1950

- In the 1950's sanitarians were first assigned to the Agency for International Development and served abroad in such programs as malaria control and water supply.

1952

- The Sanitarian category, due to the authorizing language of the PHS Acts of 1943 and 1944 was a catch all category composed of any officer who didn't fit into another category. In 1952 the non-sanitarians were removed from the category resulting in a steep drop in category strength throughout the remainder of the 1950's. The remaining officers were mainly in CDC and the PHS Division of Environmental Health.

1958

- 1958 saw the establishment of the Health Service Category which made it possible for the Sanitarian Category to be limited to true professional sanitarians.

1960

- In the early 1960's, sanitarians from the PHS, working with other sanitarians, developed a sample curriculum that would prepare an individual to work in the environmental health field. This provided the impetus for the later formation of the Accreditation Council whose function was to accredit environmental health curriculum at colleges and universities.

1962

- P.L. 86-121, The Indian Sanitation Facilities Construction Act, was passed. The law authorized USPHS to construct individual and community water and waste disposal systems for American Indian and Alaska Native homes. Funding provided by P.L. 86-121 enabled the Indian Health Service to hire PHS Sanitarians resulting in IHS having the majority of Sanitarians in PHS. While the law was passed in 1959, the first budget year was 1962.

1963

- Darold W. Taylor designated the first Public Health Service Liaison Officer for Sanitarian Category.

1966

- Development of initial CDC home study courses in environmental health by C. Bradley Bridges.

- Creation of the American Intersociety Academy for the Certification of Sanitarians. Several PHS sanitarians were founders of this organization.

1967

- By executive order President Lyndon Johnson ordered the reorganization of the USPHS without the oversight of Congress. The Surgeon General was placed under a new political appointee position, the Assistant Secretary of Health. Over the next 2 years, PHS went through multiple reorganizations with components broken up and responsibilities moved to new organizations. One of the changes was the Sanitarians and responsibility for food safety and inspection was moved from the PHS Division of Environmental Health to the Food and Drug Administration.

1968

- The establishment of the Sanitarian Career Service Board.
 - This became the Sanitarian Career Development Committee and is now called the Sanitarian Professional Advisory Committee (SPAC).
 - The SPAC has operated continuously since 1968, but in 1999 became the Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC).
- Residency program developed at the PHS Hospital in New Orleans, together with Tulane University, to train sanitarians as Institutional Control Officers. H. Harold Lehman was the first sanitarian to complete this residency.

1969

- The 1943 appointment standards required an MPH degree for commissioning in the category. By the late 1960's as the environmental movement increased the demand for Sanitarians and more undergrad EH programs were established, the appointment standards were changed to include officers with undergrad degrees in the reserve corps. The shortage of sanitarians prompted HEW to offer health profession scholarships to Sanitarian students with a pay back obligation in PHS.

1970

- By executive order President Nixon created the Environmental Protection Agency. EPA was created by combining multiple existing federal programs, including the remaining components of the old PHS Division of Environmental Health, at the time composed mostly of PHS Engineers.

1974

- John G. Todd, Dr. P.H. was appointed the 2nd Liaison Officer for the Sanitarian Category. This title later was changed to the Chief Sanitarian Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service.

1980

- The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry was created by the Superfund Act. The first Sanitarians were assigned to ATSDR in 1988.

1981

- Davis Calvin Wagner Award was established for sanitarians by former Assistant Surgeon General, Dr. Carruth J. Wagner. Dr. Wagner served in a variety of important administrative positions in the PHS. Truman L. McCasland, Dr. P.H. became the Director of the PHS Hospital in San Francisco.

1982

- In response to the Office of Management and Budgets effort to eliminate the Corps, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop initiates a series of initiatives to "Revitalize" the Commissioned Corps of the US Public Health Service. One of the initiatives was to increase the visibility of the corps by resumption of wearing the uniform by PHS officers.

1986

- Geswaldo A. Verrone, Dr. P.H. was appointed the 3rd Chief Sanitarian Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service.

1987

- The model charter for Professional Advisory Committees, which borrowed heavily from the Sanitarian's Charter, was adopted.

- Richard Driscoll became the first sanitarian to be accepted to the Epidemiological Investigative Service of CDC.
- Sanitarians assisted in emergency situations both domestically and abroad which included the Teton dam collapse in Idaho, Cuban-Haitian influx, and the Sudan.

1989

- Bruce R. Chelikowsky, RS, MPH was appointed the 4th Chief Sanitarian Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service.

1994

- Ralph J. Touch, RS, PhD was appointed the 5th Chief Sanitarian Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service.
- 1994 was also the 50th anniversary of Sanitarian Category.

1997

- After decades of debate, the Sanitarian appointment standards were significantly changed in 1997. The new standards created 4 career tracks (general EH, Industrial Hygiene, Occupational Health and Safety, and Health Physicist) to reflect the different types of Sanitarians commissioned by PHS. Each career track was given different appointment requirements.

1999

- Thomas E. Crow, RS, MS was appointed the 6th Chief Sanitarian Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service.
- The name of the Category was changed to Environmental Health Officer Category on October 1, 1999.
- Likewise, the Sanitarian Professional Advisory Committee (SPAC) was changed to the Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC).

2001

- Randy E. Grinnell, RS, MS was appointed the 7th Chief Environmental Health Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service.
- Readiness and response in the PHS Corps received renewed emphasis following the attacks of Sept 11, 2001 and the Anthrax poisoning deaths.
- Surgeon General Carmona and HHS Secretary Thompson instituted initiatives to "Transform" to corps by increasing the readiness of officers, the initiatives included new Response related positions filled by EHO's in the HHS Office of Secretary.

2005

- Craig A. Shepherd, RS, MPH, DAAS was appointed the 8th Chief Environmental Health Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service.

2009

- Michael M. Welch, REHS, MS, DAAS was appointed the 9th Chief Environmental Health Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service.

2010

- The Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act of 2010 eliminated the reserve corps of USPHS, the EHO category's reserve corps appointment standards were adopted as the new EHO Regular Corps appointment standards.

2013

- CAPT Alan Parham, RS, MPH was appointed the 10th Chief Environmental Health Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service.

2017

- RADM Kelly M. Taylor, MS, REHS was appointed the 11th Chief Environmental Health Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service

Appendix B – U.S. Military Enlisted Rank Chart

U.S. Military Enlisted Rank Chart

The following information is provided by the DOD at:
<http://www.defense.gov/about/insignias/enlisted.aspx>

Service members in pay grades E-1 through E-3 are usually either in some kind of training status or on their initial assignment. The training includes the basic training phase where recruits are immersed in military culture and values and are taught the core skills required by their service component.














Basic training is followed by a specialized or advanced training phase that provides recruits with a specific area of expertise or concentration. In the Army and Marines, this area is called a military occupational specialty; in the Navy it is known as a rate; and in the Air Force it is simply called an Air Force specialty.

ARMY— * For rank and precedence within the Army, specialist ranks immediately below corporal. Among the services, however, rank and precedence are determined by pay grade.





















NAVY/COAST GUARD — *A specialty mark in the center of a rating badge indicates the wearer's particular rating. ** Gold stripes indicate 12 or more years of good conduct. *** 1. Master chief petty officer of the Navy and fleet and force master chief petty officers. 2. Command master chief petty officers wear silver stars. 3. Master chief petty officers wear silver stars and silver specialty rating marks. [TOP](#)

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|
| ARMY | NAVY | MARINES | AIR FORCE |
| | COAST GUARD | | |

The **U.S. Coast Guard** is a part of the Department of Homeland Security in peacetime and the Navy in times of war. Coast Guard rank insignia are the same as the Navy except for color and the seaman recruit rank, which has one stripe.

| | | | | |
|-----------|---|--|---|---|
| E1 | Private | Seaman Recruit (SR) | Private | Airman Basic TOP |
| E2 | Private E-2 (PV2)  | Seaman Apprentice (SA)  | Private First Class (PFC)  | Airman (Amn)  TOP |
| E3 | Private First Class (PFC)  | Seaman (SN)  | Lance Corporal (LCpl)  | Airman First Class (A1C)  TOP |
| E4 | Corporal (CPL)  Specialist (SPC)  | Petty Officer Third Class (PO3) **  | Corporal (Cpl)  | Senior Airman (SrA)  TOP |

Leadership responsibility significantly increases in the mid-level enlisted ranks. This responsibility is given formal recognition by use of the terms noncommissioned officer and petty officer. An Army sergeant, an Air Force staff sergeant, and a Marine corporal are considered NCO ranks. The Navy NCO equivalent, petty officer, is achieved at

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--------------------|---|----------------|---|---|---|
| the rank of petty officer third class. TOP | | | | | | | | | |
| | | ARMY | | NAVY | | MARINES | | AIR FORCE | |
| | | | | COAST GUARD | | | | | |
| E5 | Sergeant (SGT) | | Petty Officer Second Class (PO2) ** | | Sergeant (Sgt) | | Staff Sergeant (SSgt) | | |
| |  | |  | |  | |  | | TOP |
| E6 | Staff Sergeant (SSG) | | Petty Officer First Class (PO1) ** | | Staff Sergeant (SSgt) | | Technical Sergeant (TSgt) | | |
| |  | |  | |  | |  | | TOP |
| E7 | Sergeant First Class (SFC) | | Chief Petty Officer (CPO) ** | | Gunnery Sergeant (GySgt) | | Master Sergeant (MSgt) | | First Sergeant |
| |  | |  | |  | |  | |  |
| <p>At the E-8 level, the Army, Marines and Air Force have two positions at the same pay grade. Whether one is, for example, a senior master sergeant or a first sergeant in the Air Force depends on the person's job. The same is true for the positions at the E-9 level. Marine Corps master gunnery sergeants and sergeants major receive the same pay but have different responsibilities. All told, E-8s and E-9s have 15 to 30 years on the job, and are commanders' senior advisers for enlisted matters.</p> <p>A third E-9 element is the senior enlisted person of each service. The sergeant major of the Army, the sergeant major of the Marine Corps, the master chief petty officer of the Navy and the chief master sergeant of the Air Force are the spokespersons of the enlisted force at the highest levels of their services. TOP</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| | | ARMY | | NAVY | | MARINES | | AIR FORCE | |
| | | | | COAST GUARD | | | | | |
| E8 | Master Sergeant (MSG) | | Senior Chief Petty Officer (SCPO) ** | | Master Sergeant (MSgt) | | First Sergeant (1st Sgt) | | Senior Master Sergeant (SMSgt) |
| |  | |  | |  | |  | |  |
| | | First Sergeant (1SG) | | | | | | First Sergeant | |
| | |  | | | | | |  | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | TOP | |
| E9 | Sergeant Major (SGM) | Command Sergeant Major (CSM) | Master Chief Petty Officer (MCPO) ** *** | Fleet/Command Master Chief Petty Officer ** *** | Master Gunnery Sergeant (MGySgt) | Sergeant Major (SgtMaj) | Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt) | First Sergeant | Command Chief Master Sergeant | TOP |
| E9 | <u>Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA)</u>  | <u>Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) and Coast Guard (MCPOCG)</u>  ** *** | <u>Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps (SgtMajMC)</u>  | <u>Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force (CMSAF)</u>  TOP | | | | | | |

Appendix C – Balancing the Seven Dimensions of Wellness

From the World Health Organization

Are You Balancing the Seven Dimensions of Wellness?

Wellness is a dynamic process of becoming aware of and making conscious choices toward a more balanced and healthy lifestyle. It includes learning new coping and communication skills that address both the positive and negative aspects of human existence. Over the past decade, we have come to realize that survival of the species requires more than fitness. The concept of wellness includes seven dimensions.

Assess your current seven dimensions of wellness by filling out the questions below, marking the choice that best reflects your current behaviour. Although this is not a scientific questionnaire, it will help you become more aware of your current level of wellness and what changes, if any, you might want to make.

1. Social wellness is the process of creating and maintaining healthy relationships.

| | N e v e r | S o m e t i m e s | O f t e n | A l w a y s |
|--|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| I communicate honestly and directly. I resolve conflict in a healthy, timely manner. | | | | |
| I give and take equally in cooperative relationships. | | | | |
| I treat every person with respect. | | | | |
| I use my economic resources to support social responsible choices. | | | | |
| I maintain a strong mutual, interdependent social support system. | | | | |

2. *Physical wellness is the process of having a flexible, aerobically fit body.*

| | N e v e r | S o m e t i m e s | O f t e n | A l w a y s |
|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| I maintain a consistent exercise regimen consisting of flexibility and muscular strengthening exercises and at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise daily. | | | | |
| I balance the amount of food I eat with the amount of exercise. My body fat is in a healthy range for my age and no more than 20% of my calories are coming from fat. | | | | |
| I manage stress and do some activity that elicits the "relaxation response" for at least 15 minutes per day. | | | | |
| I abstain from addictions including caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, and drugs both over-the-counter and illicit. | | | | |
| I take proactive steps to avoid and prevent injury, illness, and disease, including sexually transmitted diseases. | | | | |

3. *Emotional wellness is the process of creating and maintaining a positive realistic self concept and enthusiasm about life.*

| | N e v e r | S o m e t i m e s | O f t e n | A l w a y s |
|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| I recognize that I create my own feelings and am responsible for them. | | | | |
| I can express all ranges of feelings including hurt, sadness, fear, anger, and joy and manage related behaviors in a healthy way. | | | | |
| I accept and appreciate my worth as a human being. | | | | |
| I avoid blaming other people or situations for my feelings and behaviors. | | | | |
| I can realistically assess my limitations and cope effectively with stress and ego. | | | | |

4. *Career wellness is the process of making and maintaining choices that are meaningful and contribute to your personal growth as well as work.*

| | N e v e r | S o m e t i m e s | O f t e n | A l w a y s |
|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| I have chosen a job role that I enjoy and that matches my values and lifestyle. | | | | |
| I have developed marketable job skills and keep them current. | | | | |
| I balance work with play and other aspects of my life. | | | | |
| I earn enough money to meet my needs and save to provide economic stability for myself and/or family. | | | | |
| My work benefits individuals and or society. | | | | |

5. *Intellectual wellness is the process of using your mind to create a greater understanding of yourself and the universe.*

| | N e v e r | S o m e t i m e s | O f t e n | A l w a y s |
|--|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| I view learning as a lifelong process and question my views and change them in accordance with new information. | | | | |
| I listen to ideas different from my own and constantly re-examine my judgements on social, cultural, gender, race, ethical and political issues. | | | | |
| I take risks, learn from my mistakes, and question authority. | | | | |
| I appreciate and explore the creative arts of theatre, dance, music, and expressive art. | | | | |
| I seek opportunities that challenge my critical thinking skills. | | | | |

6. *Environmental wellness is the process of making choices to create sustainable human and ecological communities, improving qualities in air, water, land, and space.*

| | N e v e r | S o m e t i m e s | O f t e n | A l w a y s |
|--|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| I am moving toward limiting my acquisitions to those that contribute to sustainability. | | | | |
| I eat low on the food chain and minimize eating products that require a disproportionately high cost to deliver. | | | | |
| I live in harmony with nature and the universe. | | | | |
| I take personal and social responsibility for creating sustainable communities with chemically free air, water, and soil. | | | | |
| I recognize my impact on the environment and take deliberate action to minimize my impact, including responsible population control. | | | | |

7. *Spiritual wellness is the process of "experiencing life" while seeking meaning and purpose in human existence. Spirituality allows one to have consistency between values and behaviours.*

| | N e v e r | S o m e t i m e s | O f t e n | A l w a y s |
|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| I have a deep appreciation for the depth of life, death, and understanding universal human connection or consciousness. | | | | |
| I recognize that there are many spiritual paths and that every spiritual tradition recognizes and teaches basic precepts or laws of wise and conscious human conduct. | | | | |
| I integrate my "spiritual practice" within everyday life of work, family and relationships. | | | | |
| I appreciate the individual uniqueness, diversity, and need for connectedness among all people. | | | | |
| I have a consistency between my beliefs, values, and behaviors. | | | | |

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Appendix D – Personal Health Screening Guidelines

Personal Health Screening Guidelines

| | Screening | Purpose | 20-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60+ |
|----------------|---|--|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| GENERAL | Cholesterol, HDL, LDL and triglycerides | Identify people at high risk for coronary artery disease | Every 5 years depending on level | Every 5 years depending on level | Every 1-3 years depending on level | Annually | Annually |
| | EKG | Identify injury to heart or irregular rhythms | | | Baseline test between ages 40 and 45 | Annually | Annually |
| | General Physical Exam | Detect conditions before symptoms develop | Every 2-3 years | Every 2-3 years | Every 2-3 years | Annually | Annually |
| | Immunizations | Create immunity against a particular disease | Diphtheria–Tetanus every 10 years. Rubella once if necessary (females only). Influenza annually age 65 and older. Pneumococcal vaccine once after age 65. | | | | |
| | Rectal Exam | Detect any abnormalities in the rectum | | | | Annually | Annually |
| | Colonoscopy | Detect cancers and growths (polyps) on the inside wall of the colon before they become cancerous | | | | Baseline test at 50, then every 5-10 years | Every 5-10 years |
| | Hemoccult | Detect blood in stool to screen for various diseases | | | | Annually | Annually |
| | General Eye Exam | Detect hidden disease processes in the eye or body as a whole | Every 5-10 years | Every 5-10 years | Every 3-5 years | Every 3 years | Every 1-2 years |
| WOMEN | Breast Self Exam | Look for color changes, skin irregularities, lumps and changes in the nipples | Monthly | Monthly | Monthly | Monthly | Monthly |
| | Mammography | Detect cancer and precancerous changes | | | Baseline test at 40 | Annually | Annually |
| | Pap Smear | Detect abnormal cells that may become cancerous | Annually | Every 1-3 years | Every 1-3 years | Every 1-3 years | Every 1-3 years |
| | Pelvic Exam | Detect cancer and precancerous changes of the cervix, uterus and ovaries | Annually | Annually | Annually | Annually | Annually |
| | Bone Density Screening | Detect osteoporosis and bone thinning | | | | | Baseline test at 60 |
| MEN | Prostate Specific Antigen | Detect prostate cancer in the earliest stages | | | | Annually | Annually |
| | Testicular Self Exam | Detect testicular cancer, the most common malignancy in American men between ages 15 and 35 | Monthly | Monthly | Monthly | Monthly | Monthly |
| | Digital Rectal Exam | Identify an early growth or tumor in the prostate gland | | | | Annually | Annually |

Appendix E – Basic Readiness Compliance Checklist

The latest version of the USPHS Basic Readiness Compliance Checklist can be found at:

https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/RedDOG/Forms/Basic_Readiness_Checklist.pdf

Appendix F – Common Functions of EHOs

An EHO on assignment brings a great deal of visibility to the Commissioned Corps. With your credentials as an EHO you will be initially viewed as an expert in every aspect of health and safety. Your biggest asset will be the connections you have to all areas that will range from food preparation and storage to chemical exposures. The key factor is to realize you must have a willingness to meet the request head on. You need to be willing to step outside of your comfort zone and address any problem that may confront you. An assignment may be for something that you know nothing about. You may spend time researching a substance, how to sample, and its symptoms. You should be on the lookout all of the time for exposures and potential safety issues.

Below is merely a snapshot of roles Officers fill at various agencies and resources that may assist in getting started if you are breaking into a new area.

Food Sanitation:

Almost too many agencies to name would provide experience in food service, but for sure: IHS, FDA, USDA, and the National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) Vessel Sanitation Program are a good start for overseeing food service, knowledge of handling practices, and basic sanitation/pest control of spaces.

Several options for training and resources are available but notably:

- ServSafe training – Both the food service operator and the manager course are helpful for basic food sanitation procedures and practices.
- Training courses provided by FDA: <http://www.fda.gov/Training/default.htm>
- Food Service Inspection Service provides training: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/home>
- CDC's NCEH also offers a foodborne illness outbreak course: http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/elearn/ea_fio/index.htm
- NEHA has a new Food Sustainability certification that covers the entire food process from farm to table that would be very beneficial to have: <http://www.nehatraining.org/>

Safety:

Safety is the bread and butter of many EHOs and not limited to any particular agency. A Safety Officer is in high demand during deployments, and every agency or workplace requires a safety manager.

Listed here are a few go-to resources for safety professionals:

- Board of Certified Safety Professionals: <http://www.bcsp.org/>
- American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists Links webpage: <http://www.acgih.org/Resources/links.htm>
- American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine: <http://www.acoem.org/>
- National Safety Council: <http://www.nsc.org/Pages/Home.aspx>

The following are more specific safety topics and selected quick-reference resources:

- Emergency action plans may be required for your office. If there is an existing emergency action plan, it will identify possible emergencies and give recommendations for preplanning. To learn more about the requirements of emergency action plans, review OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910, Subpart E – Exit Routes, Emergency Action Plans, and Fire Prevention.
- Life safety is primarily focused on preserving life in the case of a fire, and evacuation. The NFPA 101 Life Safety Code is a difficult document to dig in to without a lot of background. Review the of Life Safety Code. Obtain training as soon as possible to save time identifying the requirements that apply to your occupancies.
- Electrical safety should be a part of an office safety plan. You should understand the basics of electrical safety, and how to identify some of the common electrical hazards such as exposed conductors and overloaded circuits. To learn more about electrical safety requirements in the workplace, review OSHA’s Electrical Safety Standard, 29 CFR 1910, Subpart S.
- Ergonomics is a study all in itself. Be familiar with the concept and ready to expand your knowledge on a specific job task. Lifting safety should be a regular topic at safety meetings as a refresher on how to properly lift heavy or awkward loads. As a start, see the NIOSH page at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ergonomics/> and the OSHA page at <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/ergonomics/>.
- Industrial environments tend to be less familiar to many new EHOs, and it can take a bit of time to understand the dangers present. Many safety trainings are available such as OSHA 10-hour/30-hour courses that can give you much of the general safety information that you will need. However, nothing replaces site-specific training and experience.
- Personal protective equipment. Proper PPE is one of the first questions to ask when you arrive at a scene and are concerned “Is the scene safe? Do I have the necessary PPE, and things I need to proceed to be safe? PPE is available to provide protection for most situations and is hazard specific. Make sure the PPE you have will provide adequate protection for the workplace hazards. For more information on PPE, review the OSHA Personal Protective Equipment Standard 29 CFR 1910.132, Subpart I
- Lock-out Tag-out is the process required to de-energize equipment so that all potentially hazardous energy is controlled. If you are in a situation requiring LOTO, ensure you have been trained and understand the hazards of the work. To learn more about LOTO requirements, review OSHA’s Control of Hazardous Energy Standard, 29 CFR 1910.147.
- Fall protection is generally a program to ensure that employees are not exposed to unguarded fall hazards without appropriate PPE or other preventive measure. Any time a work surface is greater than 4 feet high, fall protection must be considered. Ladder safety is a major component of fall protection, and understanding how to properly use step ladders and extension ladders would be basic, but valuable knowledge for any EHO. To learn more about fall protection, visit the OSHA website, and view the General Industry Standards 29 CFR 1910.23, 1910.25, 1910.26, 1910.27, 1910.28, 1910.67, 1910.58, and 1910.132.

- Confined spaces are defined as any space large enough for a worker to enter and perform a job, but has limited or restricted means for entry or exit, and is not designed for continuous occupancy. Examples of confined spaces include manholes, tanks, silos, tunnels, vaults storage bins, and ductwork. Permit-required confined spaces are those that might contain an additional hazard such as potential for entrapment, or hazardous atmospheres. Confined spaces and permit-required confined spaces present a high level of danger, and any worker who would enter should receive extensive training and be properly equipped. As an EHO you will likely be involved with a confined space entry or at least a question regarding a confined space. Gaining training on this topic is highly recommended for EHOs. To learn more about regulations on permit-required confined spaces, review OSHA's Permit-Required Confined Spaces Standard, 29 CFR 1910.146.
- Excavation and trenching occurs on many industrial sites, and it is important to understand that any excavation or trench over 5 feet deep has a potential of caving in and burying workers. Do not enter an excavation or trench unless you have been trained and understand the hazards. Refer to OSHA's Excavations Standard, 29 CFR 1926, Subpart P.
- Heavy equipment – Are there powered industrial trucks, cranes, vehicles, etc. on the industrial site? If so, there are many hazards. Understand the blind spots of all vehicles and equipment, and never work under a suspended load. Do not attempt to inspect any heavy equipment unless you have specifically been trained.

Emergency Response/Disaster Support for EHOs:

Emergency response training and environmental health skills in general are highly desirable as they are the most needed in times of natural disasters.

- The EHO disaster field survival guide is a must have.
http://ehopac.org/resources/readiness/EHO_UtilizationHandbook.pdf
- CDC disaster resources page: <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/index.html>
- The CDC NCEH course “Environmental Health Training in Emergency Response Course” hosts workshops as well as online training: <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/eLearn/EHTER.htm>.
- Consider local FEMA and Red Cross emergency response courses and manuals for sheltering both disaster victims and public health workers. These are also available via an internet search for your local county or state.
- For water testing and sanitation protocols a good start is the EPA site:
<http://water.epa.gov/drink/emereprep/>.

Chemical Exposure Investigation:

This work may be predominantly limited to EPA, CDC's ATSDR and NIOSH, USCG, and possibly IHS. The following are some beginning resources:

- Routes of exposure, epidemiological interviews/investigations, testing and sampling, and reporting: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/hazardoustoxicsubstances/index.html>.

The following is a list of helpful tools. It is best to customize your toolkit for the type of inspection and environment you will be in.

Correct PPE and clothing (gloves, mask, face shield-carry at least one level higher than you suspect).

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Note pad | Small flashlight |
| Camera or smart phone | Kestrel for temperature and outdoor conditions |
| Alcohol swabs/hand sanitizer | Compass |
| Infrared thermometer and with probe | Handyman pliers tool |
| pH paper/water test kit | Pocket knife (except on government installations) |
| Electric outlet continuity tester | |
| Monocular | |

Conclusion:

Environmental Health Officers are actively sought after and employed by a large number of agencies for different purposes because of the variety of skills they possess. An EHO on assignment, whether a detail or deployment, brings a great deal of visibility to the Commissioned Corps. With your credentials as an EHO you will be initially viewed as an expert in every aspect of health and safety. Your biggest asset will be the connections you have to all areas within the public environmental health sphere, which is quite large, from food preparation and storage to chemical exposures. The key factor is to realize you must have a willingness to meet the request head on. At times, you need to be willing to step outside of your comfort zone, be resourceful, use connections and you can address any problem that may confront you. With that perspective in mind, there will be plenty of rewarding opportunities awaiting you in the Commissioned Corps.

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